

MAY 1914

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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

HENRY - HUST -

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stories by
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REEVE

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Kennett Harris
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Ellis Parker Butler
Cyrus Townsend Brady
Albert Payson Terhune
George Randolph Chester
and 7 others

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PAINTED BY M. LEONE BRACKER

"Do you suppose that, with such love driving me on, any objection which you may make will stop me?
No! I set out to attain you as the summit of my desire, the one thing in this world I
want, and will have!" Again that great fear of him possessed Gail.

From "The Ball of Fire," by George Randolph Chester and Lillian Chester, page 161

May
1914

THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE

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No. 1

RAY LONG, Editor

Big Features for Red Book Readers

James Oliver Curwood's novel of the Northland, "*God's Country—and the Woman*," will begin in next month's RED BOOK—the June issue, on all news-stands May 23rd. It is more powerful drama and more gripping story than his famous stories of Kazan, the wolf-dog. It is quick action, gripping romance from the first paragraph. It is unique in its accuracy of color; it works to a climax that takes your breath; it carries a love story such as you've never read. It is James Oliver Curwood's masterpiece.

Rupert Hughes' "*What Will People Say?*" ends in this issue. Don't fail to read this concluding installment. You have to look among the writers of other generations to find its equal. Rupert Hughes is writing another novel for you—a novel of New York as compelling in its idea as this one. It will begin in an early issue.

Elinor Glyn's "*The Man and the Moment*" is just at its most interesting point. If you haven't read the earlier chapters, our style of synopsis enables you to begin now and get the whole story.

Curwood, Hughes, Glyn, the Chesters and that host of star short story writers every month—it's no wonder

**THE RED BOOK IS SETTING THE
PACE IN THE MAGAZINE WORLD**



The SLEEP

THE FIRST OF A NEW SERIES
DETECTIVE'S METHODS OF

By Arthur

Author of the famous

ILLUSTRATED BY



ONE of the distinctive features of a story of scientific criminal detection written by Arthur B. Reeve is that his material is all scientifically correct. Mr. Reeve is an authority, as well as a polished writer and a weaver of fascinating plots. His series of stories of the exploits of Guy Garrick, of which this is the first, is a brilliant addition to the RED BOOK'S list of fiction from the real "star" writers of the day.

"THERE'S a criminal after your own heart aboard this ship, Mr. Garrick."

Tom Marshall, purser of the *Herculean*, dropped down deeply into an easy chair in a secluded corner of the smoking-room beside a young man who seemed to be engaged in a peculiarly uninteresting game of solitaire.

"How is that?" asked the man addressed as Mr. Garrick, as he swept the cards off the table and shuffled them with the air of one to whom anything would have been a welcome relief to the tedium of the voyage.

Marshall handed to him a proof of a

column of the *Daily Wireless Herculean*, a newspaper published on ship under his own direction.

"Some one has the true instincts of a headline writer, at any rate," remarked Garrick, his face brightening as he caught what stood at the head of the single column of proof. "Who wrote this?"

"I did," replied Marshall with pardonable pride. "It's in the blackest type the ship's limited composing room possesses. Oh, Lord," he added, "in addition to all my other duties, I'm a printer, too. What do

you think of it, Mr. Garrick?"

Garrick said nothing for the moment. He was absorbed in reading the article:

PRETTY DEBUTANTE ROBBED OF JEWELS

Famous Chateaurouge Solitaire, Engagement Ring of Miss Demarest of New York, Among Stolen Brilliants.

Miss Vesta Demarest, of New York, was robbed last night in a most peculiar manner, of a diamond necklace valued at many thousands of dollars and of the historic Chateaurouge diamond which Count Armand de Chateaurouge gave her on the occasion of their recent betrothal.

MAKER

OF STORIES OF A SCIENTIFIC
SOLVING CRIME MYSTERIES

B. Reeve

"Craig Kennedy" stories.

GEORGE BREHM

Miss Demarest and her fiancé had left the Ritz restaurant after supper following the entertainment last night, for a few minutes on the upper deck. It was cool and the Count asked if he might get her a heavier coat or steamer rug. While waiting for him to get the wraps, Miss Demarest sat in a deck chair.

Returning, Count Chateaurouge found her lying unconscious in the chair. His call for help was answered quickly and Miss Demarest was carried to her room, where she now is in a critical condition from the shock. She recalls nothing of what happened on deck and thinks she may have fainted, though those who have seen how athletically she has entered into the games on ship-board cannot believe it possible.

The Steamship Company has posted an offer of \$5,000 reward for the apprehension of the thief, to which Truxton Demarest, her brother, and Count Chateaurouge add an equal amount.

Garrick read it over a second time. "Of course," he remarked slowly, "she should have deposited the jewels with you, Marshall. That's what a ship's safe is for—although in these progressive days I expect at any moment to hear of a transatlantic cracksman."

"Of course," assented Marshall, "but she didn't. Still, we can't afford to have such things take place—not on this line. So, I've been authorized to offer the reward. I came to you first because I thought you'd be interested. The young lady and her friends join in it. Will you take up the case?"

"By George," exclaimed Garrick, ev-



idently considering a mere "yes" superfluous, "what a strange coincidence it is! Even before I have landed, comes a chance to put my new knowledge to the test."

He bit his pipe contemplatively. "You remember, Marshall, that I told you some months ago that there were scores of these chances, only I never felt able to tackle them before."

Marshall nodded. Garrick had sought him out on the passage over earlier in the year, mainly because Marshall had to do with the ship's finances and finances seemed to interest the young man at the time.

Guy Garrick was a detective of the new type: young, clean-cut in face and manner, university bred, of good family, alert, athletic, and altogether of an interesting personality. He had gone to London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and other cities to study the amazing growth in Europe of the new criminal science. Now he was returning after sitting at the feet of the masters, like Bertillon, Gross, Reiss, Lacassagne, and perhaps a dozen others.

As he often put it, "There must be something new in order to catch criminals nowadays. The old methods are all right—as far as they go. But while we have been using them, the criminal has kept pace with modern science. Fortunately, the crime-hunters have gone ahead faster than they. It's my job to catch criminals and show them that they never can hope to beat the modern scientific detective."

Marshall had thought of that, and had waited only until he felt sure that he could make it worth Garrick's while before placing the case before him.

Returning now, after his schooling abroad, Garrick had at first amused himself by studying his fellow passengers. A couple of days had found him impatient to reach New York again and work.

He had often noticed Vesta Demarest, as his keen eye had run over the faces in the ship's company. She was indeed one of those noticeable girls of to-day, equally at home with tango and tennis, theatre and topics of the times.

"Take the case?" inquired Marshall briefly.

"Of course I'll take it," answered Garrick, "and gladly."

"Then let me introduce you to Miss Demarest and her friends."

Together Garrick and Marshall presented themselves at the suite occupied by the Demarest party, which consisted of Vesta, her brother Truxton, the Count, and a maiden aunt as duenna.

Vesta was indeed much upset by the robbery and they found her reclining in an easy chair, quite changed in appearance.

With a quick look, Garrick noticed that her room was one that ran to the skin of the vessel, the ports opening directly on the water and not on deck as with those above. Directly across the corridor were the rooms of Truxton and Chateaurouge, and next hers those of the aunt and Vesta's maid, Lucille. It was evident that if the robber had contemplated anything here, he would have found her amply protected by her friends, to say nothing of the ship's stewards, who were prowling about on the look-out at all hours.

"I feel terribly ill—exhausted—almost seasick," she murmured in response to Garrick's solicitous inquiry.

It was only too evident how worried she was over the loss, mostly, of course, over the solitaire which had a sentimental value in addition to its great antique and intrinsic worth.

"And to think," she cried bravely, forcing back the tears in her big blue eyes, "that I was so careful! Why, I wore the jewels always, even slept with the necklace about my neck."

"Doubtless that was why the thief took the only possible method of getting them," responded Garrick confidently.

"Then you know him?" she asked quickly.

Garrick smiled at the naïve interpretation she had placed on his deduction, but did not answer. His eyes were fixed on her sun-tanned arm, which she had raised with an expressive gesture to her throat as she described her care of the necklace. There was a peculiar little red strawberry mark on the fleshy part of the forearm.

"Did you—er—feel any pain?" he asked, still looking at the mark.

"No," she replied, watching his eyes. "I can't say I felt any pain—or anything. I think I must have struck my arm when I fainted—that is, if I did faint. You see, it is all a blank to me."

She passed her hand over her forehead as if to brush away a haze.

"The Count had just left me," she went on, struggling to recollect, "and I sat down, gazing out at sea—and, then, somehow, I woke up here—to find the Count, Truxton, Mr. Harrington, a friend of my brother's, and the ship's doctor trying to revive me, with the help of Aunt Ruth and Lucille. There: I have told you all I know—all."

"You have no suspicions?" asked Garrick.

"None—unless there may be something suspicious in being stared at. There are two or three men aboard, to say nothing of some women, who have stared at me a great deal."

Garrick smiled. He was thinking of himself, for he had not been able to resist the charm of Vesta's fresh youth.

And yet it seemed impossible that she

could have told all. It was so strange, so incomprehensible. He wondered if there could be something that she was concealing.

Garrick thanked her for her graciousness, and with Marshall excused himself, as their presence plainly added to her nervousness.

On the way out, they encountered, in a little private passageway, a tall, very pretty girl in a neat white apron and a little lace cap set coquettishly on the masses of dark hair over her dreamy brown eyes.

"That must be Lucille," whispered Garrick, when they were out of earshot.

Minutely Garrick went over the deck where Vesta had been sitting when the robbery took place. It seemed to be an unpromising thing to do, yet as he remarked, one could never tell until he had reconstructed the scene of a crime how some little thing might change its aspect entirely.

As he approached the spot from various angles, his attention was suddenly arrested by a little place on the deck which really seemed to glitter brightly in the sunlight, if he caught it just right.

He was down on his knees in a moment, with a sharp penknife, carefully scraping at it. At last, on a piece of paper, he took up what looked like a few grains of fine powder.

"What is it?" asked Marshall, expecting to find that it was a drug, perhaps.

"Powdered glass," replied Garrick briefly, "ground in. The strong wind must have carried most of the particles away."

A low exclamation told that he had found something more, perhaps a larger particle, something also gleaming in the light.

He picked it up too, and rolled it back and forth on the paper. Marshall bent over to look at it more closely.

There, in Garrick's hand, was a tiny bit of steel, scarcely three-eighths of an inch long, a mere speck. It was like nothing of which Marshall had ever heard or read. Yet he regarded the minute thing with awe. For, might it not be a new peril?

"What is it?" he asked at length, seeing that Garrick was not disposed to talk, without prompting.

"It looks like one of those new poisoned needles," he answered laconically, holding it up to the light and showing Marshall that it was in reality a very minute, pointed tube.

"Bosh!" exclaimed Marshall, reacting from the apparent simplicity of his tone. "I've heard those needle stories before. But I doubt them. In the first place, the insertion of a hypodermic needle—ever have it done, Garrick?—is something so painful that anyone would cry aloud. Then, to administer a drug that way requires great skill and knowledge of anatomy, if it is to be done with full and quick effect."

Garrick, with another glance about, to satisfy himself that he had exhausted the possibilities of this line of inquiry, had seemed to accept the remark tacitly, and started to walk rapidly away in the direction of his stateroom, taking Marshall's arm.

"Why, such an injection," continued Marshall as they walked along, "couldn't act so instantaneously as she says it did on her, either. After the needle is inserted, the plunger has to be pushed down, and the whole thing would take at least thirty seconds. And then, the action of the drug—that would take some time. It seems to me that in no case could it be done without the person's being instantly aware of it and, before lapsing into unconsciousness, calling for help or at least remembering—"

"On the contrary," interrupted Garrick quietly, "it is absurdly easy. You are right, though, Marshall, in one respect. It is not easy by the old methods that everyone now knows. For instance, take the use of chloral—knock-out drops, you know. That is crude, too. Hypodermics and knock-out drops may answer well enough, perhaps, for the criminal whose victims are found in cafés and dives of a low order. But for the operations of an aristocratic criminal of to-day, such as this one appears to have been, far more subtle methods are required. Come on in."

They had reached his room. Carefully

he closed the door, and from a corner of his portmanteau, where it was concealed in the lining, he pulled out a little case. He opened it, and in it displayed a number of tiny globes and tubes of thin glass, each with a liquid in it, some lozenges and bonbons, and several cigars and cigarettes.

Then from another part of the case he drew a peculiar looking affair and handed it to Marshall without a word. It consisted of a glass syringe about two inches long, fitted with a glass plunger and an asbestos washer. On the other end of the tube was a hollow point about three-eighths of an inch long—just a little shiny bit of steel such as he had picked up where it had been ground into the deck near the powdered glass.

Marshall looked at it, in spite of his former assurance, and began to wonder whether, after all, the possibility of being struck down and robbed or worse, perhaps, for a girl—in public places might not take on the guise of ghastly reality.

"What do you make of it?" asked Garrick, evidently enjoying the puzzled look on his friend's face.

Marshall shrugged his shoulders.

"Well," drawled the detective, "that is a weapon, the possibilities of which are terrifying. Why, it could easily be plunged through a fur coat without breaking."

He took the needle and made an imaginary lunge at the purser.

"When people tell you that the hypodermic needle cannot be employed in cases like this," he continued, "they are thinking of ordinary hypodermics. Those things wouldn't be very successful usually; anyhow, under such circumstances. But this is different. The form of this needle makes it particularly effective for anyone who wishes to use it for crime. Draw back the plunger—so—one quick jab—then drop it on the floor and grind it under your heel. The glass is splintered into a thousand bits. All evidence of guilt is destroyed, unless some one is looking for it practically with a microscope."

"Yes," persisted Marshall, "that is all right—but the pain, and the moments before the drug begins to work?"

With one hand Garrick reached into the case, selecting a little thin glass tube, and with the other he pulled out his handkerchief.

"Smell that!" he exclaimed, bending over the purser so that he could see every move and be prepared for it.

"Ugh!" ejaculated Marshall in surprise, as Garrick manipulated the thing with a legerdermain swiftness that quite baffled him, even though he had given his warning to expect something.

Everyone has seen freak moving picture films where the actor suddenly bobs up in another place, without visibly crossing the intervening space. The next thing Marshall knew, Garrick was standing across the room, in that way. The handkerchief was folded up and in his pocket.

It couldn't have been done possibly in less than a minute. Where had that minute gone? Marshall felt a sickening sensation.

"Smell it again?" Garrick laughed, taking a step toward the purser.

Marshall put up his hand and shook his head, slowly comprehending.

"You mean to tell me," he gasped, "that I was—out?"

"I could have jabbed a dozen needles into you and you would never have known it," asserted Garrick with a quiet smile playing over his face.

"What is the stuff?" asked Marshall, quite taken aback.

"Kelene—ethyl chloride. Whiff!—and you are off almost in a second. It is an anæsthetic of nearly unbelievable volatility. It comes in little hermetically sealed tubes, with a tiny capillary orifice, to prevent its too rapid vaporizing even when opened for use. Such a tube may be held in the palm of the hand, and the end crushed off. The warmth of the hand alone is sufficient to start a veritable spray. It acts violently on the senses, too. But kelene anæsthesia lasts only a minute or so. That fraction of time, however, is long enough. Then comes the jab with the real needle—perhaps another whiff of kelene to give the injection a chance. In two or three minutes the injection itself is working and the victim is unconscious, without a murmur—perhaps, as in your case,

without any clear idea of how it all happened, or, as in Vesta's, apparently without any recollection even of a handkerchief—unable to recall any sharp pain of a needle or anything else."

He was holding up a little bottle in which was a thick, colorless syrup.

"And what is that?" asked Marshall, properly tamed and no longer disposed to be disputatious.

"Hyoscine."

"Is it powerful?"

"One one-hundredth of a grain, perhaps less, of this sample will render a person unconscious," replied Garrick. "The first symptom is faintness; the pupils of the eyes dilate; speech is lost; vitality seems to be floating away, and the victim lapses into unconsciousness. It is derived from henbane, among other things, and is a rapid, energetic alkaloid, more rapid than chloral or morphine. And, preceded by a whiff of keline, not even the sensations I have described are remembered."

The purser could only stare at the outfit before him, speechless.

"In Paris, where I got this," continued the detective, "they call these people who use it 'endormeurs'—sleep-makers. The standard equipment of such a criminal consists of these little thin glass globes, a tiny glass hypodermic syringe, doped cigars and cigarettes. They use various derivatives of opium, like morphine, also codeine, heroin, dinin, narcein, ethyl chloride and bromide, nitrite of amyl, amylin—and the skill that they have acquired in the manipulation of these powerful drugs stamps them as the most dangerous coterie of criminals in existence. Now," he concluded, "doubt it or not, we have one of those fellows or a proficient student of him, aboard this ship. The question is: Who is he?"

Garrick was now pacing excitedly up and down the little room.

"You see," he added, "the police are driving such criminals out of Europe by their new methods. Thank heaven, I am prepared to meet them if they come to America."

"Garrick," exclaimed Marshall, astounded by what he had seen, "you—you are a wonder!"

Garrick and Marshall searched the ship together from truck to keel, but not a clue developed. The passenger list was thoroughly scrutinized, but no names that would have suggested any tangible clue to an old time sleuth were found. As far as Garrick could tell, there were no transatlantic crooks aboard, or professional gamblers. Players at cards there were, and heavy players, but that signified nothing.

Even Truxton himself and Harrington came in for their share of suspicion. Truxton Demarest was a debonair, dashing young man, tremendously popular, a free spender and a general social favorite. Like Harrington, he was ostensibly a broker in New York, though in his own case his business consisted chiefly in managing the estate that had been left him and Vesta by the recent death of their parents. Truxton even gave up sleep over the case, and led his faithful valet, McIntyre, a merry chase to keep his young master from searching anyone he chose.

Harrington, not being an immediate member of the family though a close friend, said very little, though once or twice, when he had something that seemed significant, he came quietly and laid it before Garrick modestly.

And sometimes it seemed that in spite of his joining Chateaurouge in the offer of a reward, Truxton was watching even his prospective brother-in-law, the Count.

"Often it seems to me, Garrick," Marshall remarked, "after reasoning the matter out in default of tangible facts, that this Chateaurouge himself could cast some light on the subject, if he chose. You know, he is of a race not without an eye to feminine beauty, and Lucille, even though she is a maid, is one of no ordinary charms and intelligence."

"Even Lucille does not escape," smiled Garrick enigmatically, "though I suppose Vesta herself and Aunt Ruth are absolved."

"Well," persisted Marshall, "I can't see that we're any closer to catching anybody."

Garrick said nothing. But as the *Herculean* at last sailed majestically up the



He had often noticed Vesta Demarest as his keen eye had run over the ship's company in the



salon "Take the case?" inquired Marshall. "Of course I'll take it," answered Garrick, "and gladly."

harbor of New York, he stood in the long saloon watching the Demarest party busy making their declarations to the boarding officers of the customs service.

He himself had very little to declare, and as he stood in an angle, watching, Marshall approached him. Marshall had evidently singled out Chateaurouge with the idea that the customs ordeal through which all were about to go might develop something.

"You don't like Chateaurouge, do you?" observed Garrick, impersonally, after a quick sidelong glance at the purser's face.

"No," Marshall admitted frankly, taken by surprise at his reading of what in reality was obvious. "No, to tell the truth, I don't like his face. I was just thinking it was of a sinister type."

Garrick shot another glance at him. "The latest work of the criminologists," he commented, "like Dr. Goring, of London, has given a body blow to Lombroso's theories. They tell us that there is no such thing as a criminal type."

"Well," insisted Marshall, "I don't like it, anyhow." He was not any too positive in his opinion, however, mindful of a previous encounter with Garrick.

"Of course," the detective went on in a low voice, "I'm not prepared to say anyone is guilty or innocent—yet. I expect some surprises in this case, and I'm not saying anything about Chateaurouge one way or the other."

"But when you begin to base judgments on faces, never forget the classic story about Lavater. He had been given the pictures of a highwayman who had been hanged, and of the philosopher Kant, whom he had never seen. When he was asked to pick out the philosopher, he picked the highwayman's picture. 'There can be no doubt in this case,' he said, 'for here one sees profound penetration in the eye and that capacious forehead which denotes the man of reflection, the mind that can separate cause and effect, analyze and synthesize. Now the calm, thinking villain is so well expressed in the other that it needs no comment.'

"No, Marshall, neither can you say that it is impossible from the appearance and nature of a person that he could have committed a certain crime. Perhaps he *did* commit it. The deeper you go into actual crime, the more truth you will find in those two rules."

The *Herculean* was warped into her berth and the usual hold-up of the customs inspection began. In this case, the regular "frisking" of passengers by the agents of Uncle Sam was even more thorough than usual.

The dock was roped off under its arching roof of steel girders, and the opposing lines of passengers and inspectors, to say nothing of plain clothes appraisers, with here and there a city detective, met each other.

Baggage was turned inside out. Piles of feminine finery were tumbled into formless heaps and pawed over by alien hands. Reticules and purses were nosed into inquisitively, as the extra search proceeded in that panorama of a vast mass of open luggage. Over at Ellis Island the same search was being made of the third class passengers, and more city and private detectives were watching the crew.

And yet, in spite of the rigid search of the customs men aided by the police, not even a clue to the jewels was found. A criminal who was clever enough to get them in the first place, was surely clever enough to elude so obvious a danger as the customs inspection.

"This fellow is as dark and mysterious a robber as ever lived," exclaimed the purser, in despair, as nothing developed. "What reason is there to suppose that he will ever be caught now?"

"Stop a moment," cautioned Garrick. "Think it out from the other end. We shall hear more of it—soon, I believe. In the first place, the spoils of a successful theft consist generally of precious stones in precious settings, as in this case. Of themselves, they will buy nothing. To offer them for sale is suspicious. Yet they must be turned into cash—or what is the use of the robbery? In some way, the booty must disappear into the bosom of the world's wealth.

"Now I believe that there is a man,

or group of men, whose sole business it is to pay cash for stolen property. They are not rough-necks of the ordinary type with which we have been familiar. But we shall hear more of them, before long."

It was the day before the *Herculean* was to sail on her return trip that Garrick dropped in on Marshall on ship-board.

"I see you maintain the same discipline while you are in port that you do on the sea," observed the detective, noticing also that the vigilance in seeking the suspected thief had not relaxed.

"Yes, that's to keep the men from getting rusty. Any word?" asked Marshall, secretly gloating at his own judgment of the case.

"Yes," Garrick replied with a quiet confidence that swept Marshall off his feet, then adding frankly, "but not the kind I expected. Miss Demarest has received a letter about the jewels."

"A letter?" repeated the purser. "How is that?"

"A few days after she arrived, Lucille was taken very ill and, as there was no place for her at the hotel, Miss Demarest allowed her to go to her brother, who lives on Ninth Street. This morning she received this letter from Lucille. Read it."

He tossed over the letter:

Since I left you, mademoiselle, I am very ill here at the home of my brother. I have a nice room in the back of the house on the first floor, and now that I am getting better I can sit up and look out of the window.

To-day a message came to me and it is about that which I write. I must not tell you all of even the little I know, but I have heard regarding the jewels you lost. They can be returned for \$10,000. You must call on me first, alone, and I will tell you what I have heard. Show this letter to no one, for if you are followed here, the person who has them is watching and will be warned. Can you come to see me here to-night at nine o'clock?

Your faithful servant,

LUCILLE.

"Of course you warned her against

going?" Marshall remarked, handing the letter back to Garrick.

"Of course. Also I have told her of the handkerchief and needle trick, lest she should be molested again some time. I gave her a little pistol, like this."

The detective displayed a little ivory-handled revolver, broke it, and as he snapped it shut again, the purser fancied that the cartridges in the pistol looked like blanks.

"Want to investigate with me?" asked Garrick, suddenly coming to the point of his visit.

Marshall assented readily, and together they sauntered up to Ninth Street. There they found the house which Lucille's note had indicated. It was an old three-story brownstone building with an entrance two or three steps up from the sidewalk level.

Garrick passed it so as not to attract any attention, and a little further on, paused before an apartment house, not of the modern elevator construction, but still of quiet and decent appearance. He had no trouble in getting past the front door, and together they mounted the stairs to the roof.

Garrick had had adventures like this before. On the roof, a clothesline tied about a chimney served to let him down the few feet from the higher apartment roof to that of the dwelling house next it.

Quickly he tiptoed over to the chimney of the brownstone house a few doors down, and as he did so, Marshall saw him take from his pocket a box. A string tied to a weight told him which of the flues reached down to the room on the first floor, back.

That determined, he let the little cedar box fastened to an entwined pair of wires down the flue. He then ran the wires back across the roof to the apartment, up, and into a little storm shed at the top of the last flight of stairs leading to the roof.

"There is nothing we can do just yet," he remarked after he had hauled himself back to Marshall on the next roof. "We are lucky not to have been disturbed, but if we stay here we are likely to be observed. Meet me to-night, Marshall, at eight o'clock in Washington Square."

Promptly to the dot, Marshall met the detective. Garrick was tugging a heavy suit-case and a small package wrapped up in paper.

"Let me carry that suit-case," volunteered Marshall.

"I'm not surprised at your being winded," panted the purser, soon finding himself in the same condition. "What's in this—lead?"

"Something that we may need, or may not," Garrick answered enigmatically, as they stopped in the shadow to rest. He carefully took the little ivory-handled revolver from an inside pocket and stowed it where it would be handy, in his coat.

Again, they managed to elude the tenants of the apartment and to reach the roof, where, now that it was dark, they felt comparatively safe.

Unwrapping the smaller package, Garrick attached the wires, as he had left them, to another little cedar box, which now Marshall had a chance to examine more closely under the light of his electric bull's eye. It was oblong, with a sort of black disk fixed to the top. In the face of the box itself were two little square holes, with sides also of cedar that converged inward in the box, making a pair of little quadrangular pyramidal holes which seemed to end in a small round black circle in the interior, small end.

The minutes that followed seemed like hours, as they waited, not daring to talk lest they should attract attention.

"We're early," said a voice near them, suddenly.

Marshall leaped to his feet, prepared to meet anything, man or devil. Garrick seized him and pulled him down, a strong hint to be quiet. Too surprised to remonstrate, since nothing happened, he waited, breathless.

"Yes, but that is better than to be late. Besides, we've got to watch that Garrick," said another voice. "He might be around."

Garrick chuckled.

There was a peculiar metallic ring to the voices.

"Where are they?" whispered Marshall. "On the landing below?"

Garrick laughed outright, not boister-

ously, but still in a way which to his friend was amazing in its bravado if they were so near.

"I didn't have to go to Europe to find out what an American vocophone was," he said aloud, yet careful not to raise his voice, as before, so as not to disturb the apartment dwellers.

"A vocophone?" repeated Marshall.

"Yes, this cedar box," he explained tapping it, "the little box that hears and talks. It talks right out, you know."

Marshall began to understand.

"Those square holes in the face," Garrick went on, "act like little megaphones to that receiver inside, magnify the sound and throw it out so that we can listen just as well, perhaps better, up here than if we were down there in the room with them."

Still perceiving the puzzled look of amazement which his explanation had not entirely removed from his friend's face, he added: "Why, Marshall, don't you understand? They are down there in that back room—Lucille, I think, and a man. Listen."

"Have you heard from her?" asked the man whose voice Marshall could not quite recognize.

"*Non*—but she will come. *Toila*—she has cried her pretty eyes out over the ring already. She will come."

"How do you know?"

"Because, I know."

"Oh, you women!"

"Oh, you men—making love to one woman like me, when you really want another!"

"Lucille," broke in the man coaxingly, "you are a wonder. I owe you much, and I owe much to the friends in Paris who helped me and introduced you to me. I could not have found a better partner in all Paris. But—love! You know no more of love than the dealers in fine gems with whom we work. The gay life—you love that. So do I—with you. But this is different. Lucille, you must meet her when she arrives. Reassure her. Then, when I appear, after I explain, there will be no more trouble—you know. And the fifty thousand francs I promised you are yours. Think of it—what wealth! How far it will take you, my beauty!"

It was evident that the two had a certain regard for each other, a sort of wild animal affection, above, below, beyond, without the law. They seemed at least to understand each other.

Garrick made a motion as if to turn a switch in the little vocaphone, and rested his hand on it.

"I could make those two jump out of the window with fright and surprise," he said, still fingering the switch. "You see, it works the other way, too, if I choose to throw this lever. Suppose I should shout out, and they should hear, apparently coming out of the fireplace, 'You are discovered. Thank you for telling me all your plans, but I am prepared for them already.' What do you suppose they would—"

He stopped short.

From the vocaphone had come a sound like the ringing of a bell.

"Sh!" whispered Lucille hoarsely. "Here she comes now. Into the next room!"

A moment later came a knock at a door and Lucille's silken rustle as she hurried to open it.

"How do you do, Lucille?" they heard a tremulous voice repeated by the faithful little vocaphone.

"Comment vous portez-vous, Mademoiselle?"

"Très bien."

"Mademoiselle honors her poor Lucille beyond her dreams. Will you not be seated here in this easy chair?"

"My God!" exclaimed Garrick, starting back from the vocaphone. "she has gone there—in spite of my warning!"

Instantly Marshall recognized now, even in the mechanical reproduction, the voice of Vesta Demarest.

Independent, self reliant to the point of being headstrong, she had disregarded the explicit warning of Garrick, in her anxiety for the diamonds, and especially the ring of Chateaurouge.

"Where are the jewels, Lucille?" she asked eagerly.

"I have them not here. But if Mademoiselle will wait, and will go with me in a cab to get the money for them. I know how to get them, but that is all. Shall I call a cab?"

There was a silence for a moment.

Evidently Vesta, having gone so far, had little compunction about going further.

"Yes," she murmured.

At once Marshall was alive to the danger. All the stories of white slavery and kidnapping that he had ever read rioted through his head. He felt like calling out a warning. Yet Garrick still delayed his finger on the switch.

A little cry came out of the machine.

"What—you here?" Vesta exclaimed, apparently rising.

"Yes, Vesta," said a man's voice.

"Don't be alarmed."

"But the jewels—"

"Jewels? You shall have those and a thousand others, Vesta. Jewels? What are jewels to me, who have only to speak the word and wait, and any jewel in the world will be mine? There is one jewel—I—I want," he concluded. "You!"

Apparently he had approached her.

"No-no-no," she cried in horror.

"If not willingly, Vesta, then by force. I—"

"You do not dare. All the money I have will be poured out by Truxton to get me back and run you down, if you dare—"

"Money!" He laughed grimly.

"Money! You haven't a penny. Your brother owes me on stocks more than his and your combined fortunes, every penny of it. Vesta, listen to reason. You are a poor girl. I am a rich man. All he had belongs to me now, and more, much more. Yet all is yours. Come!"

She apparently had run from him and found the door locked.

"Then—I shall—take you!"

Garrick quickly depressed the switch. Clear as a bell his voice rang out.

"Vesta, this is Garrick. Reach into your bag—the pistol—shoot—point blank. Quick! I shall be with you in a minute."

There was a moment of startled surprise in the room below; then followed a mocking laugh.

"Ha! ha! I thought you'd pull something like that, Garrick. I don't know where you are. But it makes no difference. There are many ways of getting out of this place and at two of them I have a high-powered limousine. Vesta—"

will you go—quietly”—there were sounds of a struggle—“after the needle—”

A scream had been followed immediately by the crack of a shot, ringing out through the vocophone.

A thud as of a heavy person falling was followed by a groan. In the instant that had intervened before the effects of the needle, after she had contrived to avoid the handkerchief, Vesta had fired the shot.

Garrick had already picked up the heavy suit-case and was running down the steps two at a time, Marshall hard after him.

Without waiting to ring the bell, he dashed the suit-case through the plate glass of the front door, reached in and turned the lock. They hurried through to the last barrier into the back room.

As the light wooden door yielded to their united shoulders, they found that the room was full of stifling vapor.

“The windows—open them—air,” ordered Garrick.

Marshall rushed blindly to the windows. He could see Vesta lying across a divan. Garrick bent over and felt her fluttering pulse, looked into her dilated eyes. She had evidently been struggling blindly to the window for air, also.

As he managed to smash a pane, then manipulated the catches, Marshall saw Garrick drop on his knees beside the girl. He had quickly opened the heavy suit-case. A moment later he had taken from it a sort of cap, at the end of a rubber tube, and had fastened it carefully over her face.

“Pump!” Garrick muttered to Marshall, quickly showing him what to do.

He did, furiously. Garrick stooped down and picked up the little ivory-handled pistol from her nerveless grasp.

“It was that that saved her,” he exclaimed, “the German secret service chemical pistol that shoots cartridges of gas instead of bullets—choking, stupefying—keep on with that pulmotor, Marshall. Thank heaven I came prepared with it!”

At last a feeble moan and a flutter of the eyelids from her told that she was

coming out from the effects of both the gas and drug.

“Truxton,” she moaned over and over again, “my money! Has he really got it from you? Oh, Truxton, Truxton, how could you—how could you?”

There was a deep cough and a sneeze from the other side of the room. Garrick was on the man with both knees, in an instant. A bright steel gleam followed and handcuffs snapped over his wrists.

All this Marshall caught out of the tail of his eye as he continued to supply oxygen to the lovely girl before him.

The figure at the other end of the room struggled in returning consciousness, with an imaginary foe.

Garrick had already withdrawn from his hand a little glass syringe such as the endormeuils used, and from his pocket he had taken a bundle of papers in a capacious wallet.

He turned up the light to look at the papers.

Marshall looked at the man.

It was Harrington!

“What does it all mean?” he asked, as Garrick read eagerly.

“Let me up, you—you—Chateaurouge—you French dude,” Harrington was raving in the delirium induced by the stifling vapors of the pistol. “Let me up, I say. I hold your I. O. U’s, too, for that mortgaged estate of yours—pay—pay! Ha!—you can’t. You know it. Then the girl—Stand out of my way—where—where—am I?”

Blinking, sputtering, choking, he suddenly became aware that he was dreaming, and that the struggle was with the steel of the handcuffs, not with Chateaurouge, against whom he had plotted. The half light about him was the reality.

“The devil!” he ground out. “Garrick!”

“It’s all right, Miss Demarest,” Garrick reassured her as she moaned Truxton’s name. “Harrington shall never leave this room until he restores the jewels and your property and tears up those I. O. U’s against Truxton and the Count.”

Men's Idols

By Albert Payson Terhune

Author of "Whose Wife?" "The Turnkey," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY EDMUND FREDERICK

IN this country there are three writers who have the faculty of taking real life situations—especially those of married life—and weaving them into gripping fiction. Of the trio, we consider Albert Payson Terhune the greatest. This story ranks with his famous "Whose Wife?"

MRS. MARSTON was forty-five. And only on gray days of splashing rain did she look older than thirty. This was such a day. It seemed to bank the glow that was wont to pulse youth's aura about her. She looked within ten years of her age. Although Time, in touching her placid face, had also stooped to kiss it.

In the little library, at the back of the house, she sat, her feet comfortably near the fire, her back to the two rain-thrashed gray oblongs of window through which she could at best have

seen but dimly the dismantled trees and wind-buffed cottages of the suburban street.

"The pleasantest thing about this afternoon's bridge club," she mused, smugly, "was my good excuse for staying away."

The pane's burden of driven water combined with the waning day to shut out the light that had sufficed for comfortable reading. As Mrs. Marston never did anything needlessly that threatened her comfort, she let her book drop into her somewhat ample lap and lazily stretched out one hand to ring for tea.



As in some badly managed amateur stage scene, the bell rang before she could touch its button. Rather, another bell of similar key buzzed not unmusically from the depths of the house. Mrs. Marston's comely face took on a shade of annoyance. She had been so comfortable, so snug, so happily lazy in this hour of 'tween-lights that must pass before her husband's return from the city. And now—

"I'm not at home," she called to the maid, as steps sounded along the hallway that wound from the kitchen quarters to the front door.

But the maid—a raw recruit—either did not hear the words through the slap and whistle of the gale or else refused to believe a statement that so outraged her own sense of sight and hearing. For presently the front door opened. In came a shivery, disagreeable gust of wind that penetrated even to Mrs. Marston's shut-off sanctum. And on its heels came a voice, saying:

"The maid told me I should find you here. I hope it was all right for me to come straight in?"

Mrs. Marston, swallowing an exorcism against all ill-trained servants of suburban towns, rose, civilly enough, to greet her uninvited guest.

The newcomer was even younger than Mrs. Marston looked. She was of a type well worth a half hour's description; but whose keynote, motive power, charm—and peril—could as readily be summed up in the duosyllable: "Vital." Not even high boots, short skirt and other adequate rainy-day clothes could mar her attractions. And her advent seemed to be accompanied by a breath of air, as stark and bracing as the swirl of draught that had heralded her progress down the hallway. To Mrs. Marston the figurative swish of outer air was as vaguely disagreeable as the actual draught.

"You must be drenched," she commented, glancing up and down the tall figure as it emerged toward her from the doorway shadows. "Come to the fire."

She rang for tea as she spoke.

The visitor laughed at the hostess' polite concern.

"I'm not even wet," said she. "I left my raincoat and my umbrella in the hall. And these knee boots shed water like a duck's back. They told me at the bridge club that you had a cold and had to stay at home. So I made some silly excuse to leave and to hurry over here."

"It was good of you. But really, my cold—"

"No," interposed the other. "I suppose the cold fitted the weather rather than the weather the cold. I didn't come around to offer sympathy and home remedies. I came because I wanted to catch you alone. I wanted to talk to you without the chance of an interruption. I knew nobody else would call, a day like this. And Mr. Marston isn't likely to be home for some time. So—"

The arrival of the Swedish maid conveying the tea things caused a break in the guest's rapid flow of talk. Mrs. Marston busied herself over the cups; and, even after the servant's departure, made no effort, beyond a drearily obvious comment on the weather, to help along the conversation.

This visit came as near to irritating Mrs. Marston as could any ordinary mishap. Not only did she resent the loss of her cozy hour of solitude by the red grate-fire, but her annoyance spread to the caller herself.

She had never been able to like Mrs. Frayne, during the two years they had been street-neighbors. And with the distaste was mingled a healthy blend of envy. The younger woman was so strong, so insolently healthy and vigorous, so full of tireless, buoyant life. Mrs. Frayne's amused tolerance of the vile weather through which she had just tramped for a full mile was a sample of her general attitude.

There was about her, too, an independence which, while never unfeminine, awoke a throb of annoyed jealousy in the ultra-womanly Mrs. Marston, even as her neighbor's splendid vitality seemed to reproach and mock her own softer and weaker physique.

Mrs. Frayne's husband had been Jack Marston's closest friend as well as his law partner. When, two years earlier, Frayne died and his young widow moved to the suburbs, the two women



She looked within ten years of her age.

perforce struck up a sort of strained intimacy; and the fact that Marston managed all the thousand petty business affairs of his late partner's widow entailed a still closer community of interest.

Mrs. Frayne apparently was quite used to her hostess' lack of response to her moods. She did not seem surprised or chagrined at the older woman's lack of interest in her call. Seating herself in front of the fire, she fell to stripping off her gloves. And now, for the first time, Mrs. Marston noted that her unwelcome guest was palpably nervous—a condition so unusual that it roused the hostess to a twinge of concern.

"You spoke of wanting especially to come to see me to-day," said she. "Can I do something for you? Is anything the matter?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Frayne, speaking abruptly. "There *is* something the matter. And you can do everything for me."

She checked herself and shifted her direct gaze from the fire to Mrs. Marston. The latter seemingly was unruffled by her caller's odd words. She sat waiting, with a look of kindly inquiry, for what was to come. Her unshaken placidity irritated Mrs. Frayne. She drew her gloves through her right hand, whip-lash fashion, and hurried on, still in abrupt, nervous diction, yet now holding the other woman's eye as a fencer holds his opponent's.

"Mrs. Marston," she continued, "I don't think you like me. I am very certain,"—ignoring a politely deprecatory gesture of surprise from Mrs. Marston—"that I don't like you. I don't know why neither of us likes the other, why we always have disliked each other. And it doesn't greatly matter. It is in spite of our dislike that I've come here to-day to say something that I ought in honesty to say—to give you a fair warning."

"Mrs. Frayne?" purred the other, faintly shocked.

"I came because I fight fair," pursued Mrs. Frayne. "Because we are both women. Because I don't want to pull down the roof of any woman's house without giving her a chance to escape before the cave-in."

"Mrs. Frayne," interposed Mr. Marston, "are you certain you are quite well?"

"If you mean, am I out of my head, I am not. As to being 'quite well,' otherwise, I have never been anything else. I am a rarity among women, I suppose. But that isn't the point. I'll go on, if I may."

"By all means," pleasantly assented Mrs. Marston, in the "pray do" tone of the bridge player.

"I have come to give you fair warning," repeated the caller, "as I told you. Also, to make a request that will confirm you in believing I'm not 'quite well.' Mrs. Marston, I love your husband. He loves me. I want you to give him to me."

Mrs. Marston rose. Not angrily, or rapidly; but with the easy repose that marked all her movements. A bit of her sleeve-lace caught in a jagged point of wicker on the arm of her chair. With careful and unshaking fingers she freed it. Then she spoke, in her wonted voice of almost lazy calm.

"I don't think I need detain you any longer," she said, moving a step toward the door.

But Mrs. Frayne sat still, her eyes, big and tense, on her beautifully calm foe.

"I am not crazy," she began, "and I am not insulting you. I am merely being frank. And I am trying, as well as I can in this miserable snarl, to do the honest thing toward you and to treat you as I would want to be treated in like case. Will you hear me? It's not necessary, if you don't wish to."

Mrs. Marston stood without speaking, her hand still on the doorknob, her gentle eyes meeting her guest's with no glint of fire or of fear.

"I have come to you with a proposition," resumed Mrs. Frayne, nettled in spite of herself by the untroubled gaze that met hers. "I could have gone about it in the usual way, if I had chosen. You could have waked to find your husband gone; or your trust in him could have been shattered by accident. Some people would pity you, then. Others would laugh at you. You would be deserted, humiliated. I came to save you that."

Mrs. Marston very quietly moved back to the fire and resumed her chair, gathering her skirts about her ankles and putting her feet to the blaze; for, where she had stood beside the door, the air current close to the ground had been damp and chilly.

"Instead of letting matters take their natural course," went on Mrs. Frayne, her voice a little quickened by her victory in winning a hearing. "I am giving you a chance to forestall all such consequences—to avert the humiliation that comes to every deserted wife."

"Please explain more clearly. I am afraid I don't quite understand."

"By giving you this warning, I give you a chance to leave your husband, to tire of him or to divorce him on whatever ground you choose. In short, to free him without any ridicule or mortification to yourself. You will grant it is generous of us to give you that chance. For Jack to take on himself any blame of—"

For an instant Mrs. Marston's monumental placidity shook.

"Then Jack—Mr. Marston—told you to come? You and he arranged between you that you should—?"

"No. He knows nothing about my being here. The idea came to me to-day. It was an inspiration. And I acted on it at once."

Mrs. Marston made no reply. But the guest could see the calm, unperturbed look creep back by degrees to its customary resting place; and with it a nameless expression—fleeting, unreadable—that Mrs. Frayne had never noted before in the other's almost stolid face.

"I love Jack," said the guest. "He loves me. We found it out long ago. At first we fought against it. We tried to kill this wonderful love of ours. For your sake. For the sake of the woman I had always disliked. For the sake of the woman he no longer loved. For—"

"He told you he no longer loves me?"

"No."

"Oh."

"He had no need to. I knew it. He couldn't love you when he loves me. How could he?"

"I don't know, not being a man. But from all I've heard of men—"

"We love each other, he and I. He is my real mate. And I am his. We are meant for each other. Will you give us our happiness or must we take it? Will you avoid a scandal and 'save your face' by releasing him? Will you get a divorce quietly? Will you let us be happy? We will meet you half-way. *More* than half-way. We will accept any conditions you may dictate. It shall be made as easy for you as possible."

She paused. But her listener made no answer. Mrs. Marston's somewhat bovine eyes were apparently following patterns in the pulsing coals on the hearth. Mrs. Frayne returned to the attack.

"These things are usually handled blunderingly," she continued with a forced cynicism. "There is too much secrecy. I might almost say treachery."

"Yes," unmovably agreed Mrs. Marston, "you *might* almost say treachery!"

"The third person in such cases," declared Mrs. Frayne, "ought to be told the truth, instead of being left in the dark until it is too late. I am giving you that chance. It is unconventional. But it is honest. Jack belongs to me. I love him," she said again. "And he loves me. He does not love you."

Once more silence fell on the little room—a stillness that the chink of coal in the grate and the sharp tick of hailstones on the window served only to make more pronounced.

"Well," said Mrs. Frayne at last, and into the voice she had forced to cold firmness crept a nervous note. "Your answer?"

There was no immediate reply.

"Or," went on Mrs. Frayne, "if you want time to think it over— Of course, I realize how sudden—"

"I have had time to think it over," was the slow reply, "and I believe I can give you your answer now as well as later. You will grant, I think, that I have listened courteously—perhaps even patiently—to your rather odd demand. Will you grant me the same courtesy, please, and be patient if I am not quite as logical and business-like in my answer as you were in your—your—request? You see, I haven't had the opportunity to marshal my arguments, as you have. And, besides, I don't reason very quickly. In fact, Mr. Marston says I don't know how to reason at all."

"This isn't a matter for reasoning," corrected Mrs. Frayne, "but for decision."

"I think it will come to the same thing," timidly protested Mrs. Marston. "I'll be as brief as I can. But since you speak so strongly of honesty and fairness, isn't it honest and fair that you should listen to my side of the case, as I've listened to yours?"

"But—"

"You want me to give up my husband to you because you love him and because he loves you. You won't think I am rude when I say that your loving him is not, in my eyes, a reason why I should give him up?"

"He loves me, and—he doesn't love you."

"I'm afraid that is no reason, either. Just now it

isn't important whether he loves me or not. What really counts is that *I* love him. He needs me more at this moment



The newcomer was of a type whose charm—and peril—could be summed up in: "Vital."

than he would if he were stricken with mortal illness. He has come, it seems, to a crisis—a tremendously important turning point—in his life. A point on which all his future hangs. In every crisis, since we were married, I have stood close at his side, helping him, often carrying him, standing between him and trouble, guiding him as best I could, out of the darkness. At every turn I have helped him and I have tried to do what seemed for his best good. Now, more than ever, it is my duty to stand by him and see that he does what will bring him the fullest happiness."

"Then—"

"Before I consent to give him up to you, you will have to make it very clear that you can make him happier than I can. Unless you can prove that, I shall fight. Not for my own happiness. I grew tired of fighting for that a good many years ago. But for *his*."

There was nothing belligerent or even determined in the tone of the woman's declaration. Her voice had lost none of its soft placidity, her face none of its peaceful friendliness toward the world at large. An Angora kitten aping the tiger's roar would have given a more warlike impersonation.

"Prove that you can make him happier than I can—than I *have*," she ended, almost apologetically, "and I shall not try to stand in your way."

"Prove it?" echoed Mrs. Frayne, angrily. "How can that be proven by anything but time? It is not a matter for proof, but of faith. And I *know* it."

A faintly amused smile on her hostess' face roused the visitor to still greater vehemence.

"And," she flashed, "if it comes to 'proof,' the burden of that rests with *you*. You talk largely of making him happy. But if he is happy with you, why does he come to my house every evening? Why does he love me and why has he stopped loving the woman who claims she can make him happy? No, no. It is for you to prove you can do as much for his happiness as I can."

"Gladly. For one thing, because I love him far more than ever you can. I think that is shown by my being willing to give him up if he will be happier

with you. You know in your heart, I believe, that you wouldn't give him up to any other woman for that reason. You want *him*. Not his happiness except as he can gain that happiness with *you*. I have proved my love, I think."

"And haven't I proved mine," cried Mrs. Frayne, "by coming here and telling you everything? Do you think it was easy for me to do? Don't you suppose I'd rather have bitten out my tongue than to have said to you what I have made myself say this afternoon? If I didn't love him beyond all the world would I have done that?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Marston reluctantly, "I think you would. Your coming here to-day on this errand was terribly hard, I know. But all it shows is that you are ready to go to any length for your own happiness. Not necessarily for his. The proof of our desire for anything is our willingness to buy it. The more we want it, in the higher price we are willing to pay. But the only price you want to pay is the embarrassment of having to ask me to stand aside. You do not wish to pay for anything. You want me to give you all—for nothing in return. You want me to get out of your way so that I may not cause a scandal in which you will be involved. The fact that my husband's name will be stained, no matter on what grounds I may divorce him, doesn't seem to have occurred to you. If you truly loved him well enough to risk heaven and earth for him, you would be willing to run away with him without a thought of the results to yourself. You would face any disgrace, you would go through anything to get him. No, Mrs. Frayne, it is your own selfish happiness you ask me to give you. And till you can show me that it is for his happiness too, I can't do what you ask."

"You won't give us to each other, then?" demanded Mrs. Frayne, furiously. "You selfishly cling to a man whose love you haven't been able to keep? You would rob me of what is no longer yours. You would force us to give up everything—"

"When a woman loves, I think there isn't any question of 'giving up everything.' For there *is* nothing, except her love. As to my being selfish, perhaps I

am. But it is a selfishness that may save you from more sorrow than ever you have known. They tell me that thieves are never well balanced, mentally. That if they were they could get no pleasure from what they steal, but would always be haunted by thoughts of their victims' loss. You are not mentally unbalanced, Mrs. Frayne. You are normal. 'Gloriously normal,' my husband says. And you couldn't be indifferent forever to the fact that you had robbed me. Soon or late you would be sorry. You would be ashamed. And Love and Shame can't live long together. You'd get to remembering what a pleasant little life Jack and I used to live together till you came between us. And you would wonder sometimes, in morbid moments, if perhaps some punishment might not fall on the woman who took my home and my husband away from me.

"Then would come the other fear—the *real* fear—that must always lurk deep down in the heart of every woman who has taken another woman's husband from her. The fear: 'If he could be won from her, can't he be won from me, too?' At first that dread would be half buried. But every month, every year, it would rise farther and farther out of its grave.

"Each time you saw Jack paying the slightest ordinary attention to some other woman, you would be wondering: 'Is *she* the next? That is the way *our* affair began.' Oh, I think deserted wives are pretty well revenged, as a rule, before the whole story is told. For the woman who robs is ever in dread of being robbed in turn. She knows how easily it is done. And, if she admits it to herself or not, she knows that the man who can be drawn away from one woman can be drawn away from another."

"You would have me give up the love of my life? To lose my whole future? To—"

"No. To *save* your whole future. Your life wouldn't be spoiled. It would be—"

"You are talking in theories. Let us deal in facts, instead. In real life, theories don't always work out."

"No? But facts do. There should be one motto dinned into the ears of every

woman from the time she leaves kindergarten until the day she stops counting her white hairs. And the motto should read: '*The Wife Wins*.' You ask for facts instead of theories. You have such facts in the careers of nine out of ten men who have fallen in love with other women than their wives. Once in a blue moon you will read or hear of some man who has openly left his wife for another woman. If you could follow up such stories you would find in three instances out of five that soon or late he returns to his wife—if she will take him back.

"But the man who openly deserts his home for the 'Other Woman' doesn't represent one per cent of the married men who secretly fall in love with others besides their wives—as you tell me Mr. Marston has. Did you ever stop to think how such romances end?"

"End? Ours would never—"

"You are dealing in theories, Mrs. Frayne—the thing you just warned me against doing. Let us stick to facts, since you suggested it. Instead of theorizing on what *may* happen, let's consider what *has* happened. Not in isolated instances, but in the large majority. What has been the ending of the average run of love affairs between married men and women not their wives? In rare exceptions the wife finds out, is unreasonable and divorces her husband. In rarer cases the man elopes with the woman; but very seldom, nowadays. So seldom that the newspapers report at least twenty divorces to one elopement. And it is safe to say—between successful secrecy and the forgiveness or philosophy or common sense of wives—there is not one divorce to a hundred such clandestine affairs. Well, what is the outcome of those affairs?"

She paused, blinking peacefully into the fire and rocking very gently. Mrs. Frayne, puzzled, opened her full lips to reply, seemed to find her proposed speech inadequate, and fell silent. The shadows had deepened in the little room, until, outside the narrow radius of red fire-gleam, there was darkness. The hail and rain, slackening, now smote the windows only in intermittent and weary gusts when whipped to new activity by the wind.

"The answer to my question," went on Mrs. Marston, "is the motto I quoted a few minutes ago: '*The Wife Wins.*' Perhaps men are more like very young children than you realize. They are eager to run after the first stranger whose face pleases them. But when night is closing in, or when the new face loses its novelty—they run home to the women they are used to. Men are as much creatures of habit and habitat as any homing pigeon. They may stray far afield, but almost invariably they come back. The traits that once made them choose one woman out of all the world, and the habit of living at that woman's side for

years and years—these reassert themselves with terrible power when the gilding begins to wear off the new idol or when that same new idol doesn't know how to give them the home comforts that the wife has learned to provide by long, long study of her husband's nature and needs. Back goes the husband to the wife he once loved and whom he is quite prepared to love again if she'll let him. And if she is sensible and has the real mother-feeling for him, she'll treat him as his mother used to when he came back sick and frightened from playing truant. She may not be as happy or as certain in his love as once she was. But it will be she



"Men are like very young children. They are eager to run after the first stranger whose face pleases them."

and not he who suffers most. Yes, she takes him back. The Wife Wins. But how about the Other Woman?"

"The Other Woman?"

"Yourself, if you like, Mrs. Frayne. There can be but one winner in the hackneyed old triangle game. And I think I have shown you that the winner is *not* the Other Woman. As Mr. Marston would say: 'What's the answer?'"

"Our love is different. We—"

"Theories again. How can you say till it has been tried? Till then, you can only be guided by precedents. Your love is 'different?' Of the millions of women who care for other women's husbands, do you suppose there is one who doesn't believe or hasn't believed her particular case is 'different?' Yet in the end, they are pitifully alike. The woman in time is deserted—sometimes for still another woman; for the man who can be drawn away from one woman can be drawn away from another—but oftener he will go back to his wife. And the loser is left to nurse a broken heart—or broken vanity, which hurts worse. She is a damaged article."

"Damaged?"

"Damaged in heart, in self-respect, in self-complacency and in the eyes of the people who know. For, hide it as you will, there are always people who know and more who suspect. Do you honestly want to be such a woman, Mrs. Frayne? Do you want to be sneered at and whispered about, some day, as the woman whose lover tired of her and deserted her? A deserted wife wins sympathy. A deserted mistress gets nothing but ridicule. Do you honestly want—?"

The click of a latch and the slam of the front door broke in on the repeated question.

"I'm in here, Jack," called Mrs. Marston, in comfortable greeting. "In here by the fire. You must have caught the 4.44 instead of the 5.30."

Mrs. Frayne darted furtively toward the hall, but the heavy footsteps coming toward her were perilously close. Abandoning her hope of instant escape, she stepped back into the room, shrinking instinctively into the denser shadows near the doorway. Wet and big and breezily glad at prospect of warmth and

welcome, Jack Marston stamped unseeingly past her from the lighted hall and crossed to where his wife, in the half circle of red firelight, rose lazily to welcome him. Shedding his wet overcoat, he kissed her, perfunctorily; then, as she resumed her chair, he seated himself on the rug at Mrs. Marston's feet and sprawled there, his head on her knee, his slopping shoes to the fire.

"Your feet are soaked, Jack," said his wife, "why don't you run upstairs and change your shoes? I knew you'd be wet, so I laid out stockings and slippers and your housecoat for you."

"By and by," he objected. "I'm dead tired. And it's nice by the fire. How's everything gone all day?"

"Everything has been much as usual, most of the day," she answered, running her fingers caressingly through his damp hair. "Would you like me to get your slippers for you?"

"Never mind. I'm all right. Don't stop that rubbing business on my head. It feels good. How'd you come out at the bridge club?"

"I didn't go," she replied, glancing to the far end of the room, where, by the door, a hesitating shadow, lighter than its shadowy background, seemed to hover. "It was too stormy."

"Must have been lonely for you, cooped up here alone all day."

"I wasn't lonely. Mrs. Frayne came to see me."

His head moved, ever so little, under her hand. It was a moment or so before he spoke. Then in a tone whose carelessness would not at another time have struck her as elaborate, he repeated:

"Mrs. Frayne? That was pleasant."

"No," she contradicted, after a pause during which she knit her furry brows and seemed to be weighing to an exact fraction the amount of possible pleasure the visit had assayed. "No. It wasn't very pleasant. You see," she added, "she brought me some rather bad news."

"What's up? Is she ill?"

"No. She said particularly that she is never ill. The bad news she brought me was that you don't love me any more."

"What?" ejaculated Marston, sitting up straight, and blinking. "What's the joke?"

"It's on me, I'm afraid. She says you don't love me and that you *do* love her. And she wants me to divorce you so that you and she can marry each other."

Marston, jaw hanging, eyes a-bulge, scrambled to his feet—urged by the prehistoric instinct that in the stone age taught men to face danger standing—and stared down aghast at the plump, slowly-rocking woman whose declaration had been made in the voice and manner of one who reports the defection of a neighbor's cook. The shadow near the door moved impulsively forward, took on the vague form of womanhood; then, still unseen by the all-absorbed Marston, it slipped noiselessly back and became once more an amorphous shape. To make a dash for the pitilessly bright hallway seemed to require more daring than Mrs. Frayne could muster.

"What in blue blazes are you talking about?" roared Marston, finding his tongue.

"Only about you and Mrs. Frayne—and me," mildly returned his wife. "She explained the whole situation to me and asked me to help you both by getting out of the way and averting a scandal. She was very honest and open about it. And she really appears to be ever so much in love with you, Jack. We were still talking it over when—"

"Do you mean to tell me," blustered Marston, "that that woman dared—?"

"Oh, Jack, *please*," begged Mrs. Marston, in gentle reproof. "She loves you. Don't call her 'that woman.' And above all, don't bluff. Can't you be as honest with me as she was? Can't you, dear? It'll make it so much easier for all three of us."

Her stark calmness and gentle good-humor staggered him. The bluff was stripped away and the lie died on his lips. He stood wordless, looking dumbly down at the smiling, round face that returned his panic glare so kindly.

"You see, Jack," she soothed, "there's nothing to make a scene about. She says you want to marry her. I'm not going to stand in your way. I—"

"Marry her?" croaked Marston. "Marry her?"

And the woman who had studied him for nearly a quarter-century knew that

at last here was no deception. She drowsily lowered her eyelashes to mask the joy-light that flashed unbidden beneath them. In her former mildly protesting tone, she said:

"You will surely marry her, won't you? Not many women would sacrifice pride for a man as she did by coming to me to-day. You are under fifty, Jack, and you are well to do. You have years of happiness ahead of you if you really love her. And I want you to be happy."

"Happy!" he babbled. "Happy with her?"

"Why not, when you love her? She is too honest, too straight for either of you to be happy if you leave me and don't marry her. It is because of that honesty of hers that I know you can marry her and still retain some of your self-respect. Neither of you has anything yet for reproach, in the love affair—as the law regards such things. So you'll start even. Why, Jack, you *must* marry her since you love each other so absolutely."

"Marry her?" he repeated again; and a shiver shook him. "Marry her?"

Of a sudden he found himself on his knees, his head in the broad, soft lap where so often and so contentedly it had lain. And again the cool fingers were busy with his matted hair.

"Madge!" he groaned. "Oh, Madge, Madge! I've been such a fool! Such a fool!"

"But nothing worse," she comforted him.

"There isn't anything worse," came his muffled voice from the folds of her dress, "than the kind of fool I've been. If you knew what I've suffered, Girl! If you knew how ashamed I've been! When you've kissed me and when you've had the things to eat that I like best. And when you've believed me when I said I was going out in the evening to make business calls on clients and—oh, it's been hell! And it's a million times worse, now."

"That's because it's found out, Jack," she answered, as if expounding a simple problem to a child. "Conscience never really hurts at its worst till one is found out. Till then it just hurts enough to take the edge off the pleasure. But when discovery comes—"

"I want to tell you!" he begged. "I want to tell you. Girl, I don't know how I drifted into it. I—"

"I do, dear. She is pretty and athletic and splendidly healthy and all the other things I'm not. You got into it as a man who has roast beef for dinner every night gets into the way of ordering something different for lunch. Only—he doesn't really want to be condemned to give up roast beef forever. Does he?"

"Oh, don't joke about it!" he begged. "Please don't. And get angry, won't you? I could stand it so much easier if you'd get angry."

"Tell me about it," she quietly urged. "For all the reasons I've just given you, you got to dropping in at her house in the evenings. Go on."

"And—one evening—it was last week—last Thursday—she had on a lace dress and, as I was saying good-by, the sleeve of it got tangled in my cuff link and—"

"And your faces got near together in untangling it and all at once you kissed each other, and then you found yourself saying crazy things, and she cried and said she'd loved you always, and—"

"No," he corrected miserably. "Not always. Only this past year. So she told you the whole thing?"

"No. Not that part. I just filled that in. It was easier for me to say it than to hear it. And then it was a fool's paradise for you both till to-day—?"

"Madge, on my honor, I never asked her to marry me. I never dreamed of it. I don't see how she could have thought —"

"Perhaps it was that same 'honor' of yours that led her to think so. When a man tells a woman he loves her—a clean woman—she naturally thinks he—"

"Oh, get me out of it, Girl! I don't

love her. Honestly, I don't. I never did. It was just crazy infatuation. I—"

"Yes," she assented gravely. "I think it was. Because one doesn't deny love, (*she didn't*), any more than one denies God. But infatuation melts when exposure comes. And yours has melted. Infatuation is not scare-proof. When you found out that I know, and that she expects you to marry her, and that you'll have to if I let you go—why, you stopped caring for her. Jack, what babies men are! What a pitifully weak, disloyal baby *you* are! Disloyal to us both! You inherited from Adam, I suppose. It was he who first left a woman to pay. And the trait has stuck—like red hair or a snub nose—through all his sons and grandsons. But, at that, you men are wiser than women. For I don't believe any *man* would be fool enough to be glad—as I'm glad clear to the bottom of my silly heart, darling—that a deceptive, fickle baby of a woman was scared back into loving him again. There, there, dear! Go up and get into your dry things. You aren't going to be punished. And in a week you'll have forgiven yourself, very generously and completely. It's she who will be punished—who *is* punished."

Marston did not catch her last words. He had raised his head and was looking toward the hallway.

"What is it, dear?" asked his wife.

"I—I thought I heard the front door shut—very softly," he muttered. "I suppose it was the wind against one of the blinds."

"I suppose so," placidly assented Mrs. Marston. Then: "Once, Jack," she added in gross irrelevance, "you said I was too lazy to make a successful fight for anything. I wonder if you were right?"

If you care for dramatic sense in writing, polished handling of English and keen insight into life, don't miss the last installment of Rupert Hughes' great novel, "What Will People Say?" It begins on page 109. It doesn't matter whether you have read the preceding installments; the brief synopsis will give you the trend of the story. Rupert Hughes, by this work, has become our biggest novelist in this country. He is now busy on another big book, which is to begin as a serial in an early issue of the Red Book.

The Opening Chapters of "The Man and the Moment"

MICHAEL HOWARD ARRANSTOUN, of Arranstoun Castle, Scotland, sees a beautiful girl of seventeen, marries her over-night—and so begins a story as romantic as the Scottish border raids of old.

Arranstoun Castle is one of the Highland show places that delight tourists. Michael Arranstoun is the last of his race. He has a powerful body, arrogant blue eyes, vast wealth and a "devil of a temper." He has made love to Violet Hatfield, a shallow English society woman, whose husband is dying, and Arranstoun fears he will have to marry her. To get out of it he is about ready to go through a marriage ceremony with old Bessie, his gate-keeper, when Sabine Delberg, an American girl, tumbles into his sitting room and his life.

Miss Delberg is seventeen, violet eyed and heiress to a fortune which she cannot have until she is married or is twenty-one. She is pursued by an impossible American who wants to marry her for her money. She is sight-seeing at the castle, when to escape the love-making of this American, she runs into a passage and falls through a picture niche into Arranstoun's presence. They tell each other their troubles. One wants a wife who will leave immediately, and the other wants a husband who will do likewise. So they decide to marry at once. But after the ceremony, Arranstoun, overcome by his child wife's charm, clasps her in a masterful embrace and vows she shall not go from him.

The next scene of the story is laid at Carlsbad five years later. Sabine Delberg, who is known as Mrs. Howard, has developed into a lovely, mysterious woman with an aloofness of manner that is tantalizing to her many suitors. She is with early friends, the Princess Torniloni and her father, who only know that some mystery shrouds the girl's eighteenth year, when she kept away from her friends. They believe as others do that her husband turned out badly and that final separation from him will be possible whenever she wishes. He is supposed to be an American. Mrs. Howard

talks of her affairs to no one and when not with her friends spends her time at a lonely castle, Héronac, perched on a rock over the pounding surf of the rough Brittany coast. There she studies and broods with only an old woman companion and the curé of the near-by village for company.

While at Carlsbad, Henry Fordyce, closest friend of Michael Arranstoun, who advised Arranstoun against his wild, hasty marriage, meets Sabine for the first time. He has considered women only a recreation, but now finds that this silent, wonderful one is the strongest factor in his life. He asks her to marry him. She hesitates. Then she sees in a newspaper that Arranstoun, who has been in the Orient ever since finding he could not keep his wife, is at Ostend playing polo. There is a notice of his entertaining guests, among them Miss Daisy Van Der Horn, whom Sabine knows. She is at once jealous and decides to free herself from Arranstoun, but does not tell Fordyce who her husband is. Meantime Fordyce has seen Arranstoun, who has traveled constantly since the day after his marriage five years ago, but doesn't want to free himself from his wife because she made such an impression on him then. "Did you leave her right after the ceremony?" asks Fordyce. "Very—soon after the ceremony," answers Arranstoun.

Sabine goes to her Brittany home and Fordyce begs to visit her there. She consents and he writes that he is bringing a friend, without naming him. When, from her high garden, Sabine sees the auto bringing her guests at the gate below, she sinks to a chair almost fainting, for the "friend" beside Fordyce is Michael Arranstoun.

Sabine gives not the slightest indication that she recognizes Michael. He has given Fordyce his word to keep hands off his friend's love affair; so, although Michael finds "Mrs. Howard" the most irresistibly attractive woman he has ever seen, he follows her lead. They have a fencing bout of wits in an old summer house, but neither speaks the tumult that is within. So goes the first afternoon and the next morning at the castle.

The Man and the Moment



By Elinor Glyn

Author of "The Reason Why," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY R. F. JAMES



LL through breakfast, Sabine devoted herself sedulously to Lord Fordyce; and this produced two results: it sent Henry into a seventh heaven and caused Michael to burn with jealous rage.

Primitive instincts were beginning to take possession of Michael, and he found it extremely

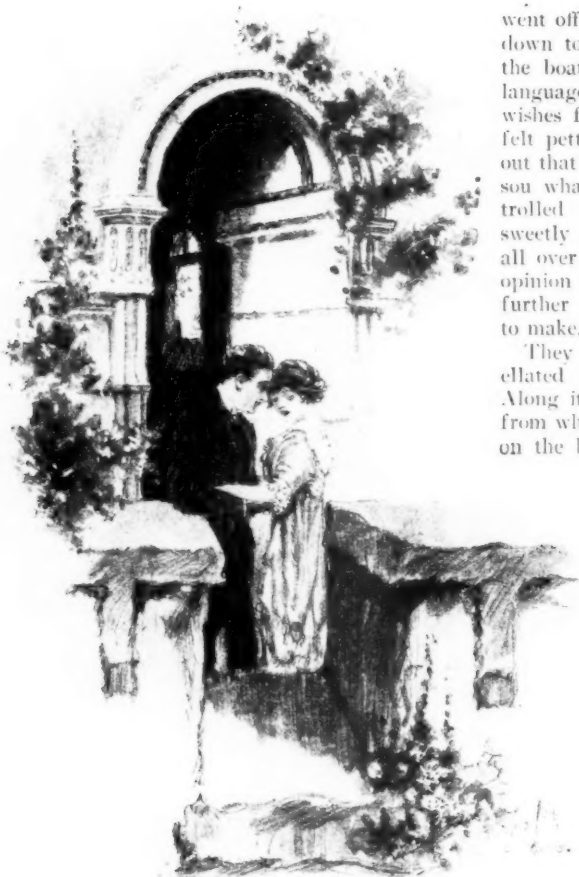
difficult to keep up his rôle of disinterested friend. It must be admitted he really was in a position difficult for any man; it is not very easy to decide what he ought to have done, short of telling Henry the truth at once; and that, he found, grew more difficult every moment. It would mean that he would have to leave Héronac immediately. In any case, he must do this directly Sabine admitted, even to him, that she was his wife. They could not together agree to leave Henry in ignorance; that would be deliberately deceiving; it would make them both feel too mean. But so long as nothing was even tacitly confessed, there seemed some straw for his honor to grasp; he clutched at it, knowing its flimsy nature. He had given himself until the next day, and now he refused to look beyond that. Every moment Sabine was attracting him more deeply—and bring-

ing certain memories more vividly before him with maddening tantalization.

Did she love Henry? Of that he could not be sure. If she did, he certainly must divorce her at once. If she did not love Henry, why was she wishing to marry him? Henry was an awfully good fellow, far better than he; but after all, she was his wife, even though he had forfeited all right to call her so; and if she did not love Henry, no friendship ought to stand in the way of their re-union.

It is astonishing how civilization controls nature. If we put as much force into the controlling of our own thoughts as we put into acting up to a standard of public behavior, what wonderful creatures we should become! Here were these two human beings, young and strong and full of passion, playing each a part with an art as great as any displayed at the Comédie Française. And all for reasons suggested by civilization, when nature would have solved the difficulty in the twinkling of an eye!

Michael spent a breakfast hour in purgatory. It was plain that Henry expected him to show some desire to go fishing, or to want some other sport which required solitude, or only the company of Madame Imogen—and his afternoon looked as if it were not going to be a thing of joy. The result of civilization then made Michael say:



Sabine, overcome by Lord Fordyce's goodness, had let him hold her arm, while her head was perilously near his shoulder.

"May I take out that boat I saw in the little harbor after breakfast, Mrs. Howard? I must have some real exercise. Two days in a motor is too much."

And his hostess graciously accorded him a permission, while her heart sank—at least she experienced that unpleasant physical sensation of heaviness somewhere in the diaphragm, which poets have christened heart-sinking. She knew it was quite the right thing for him to have done, and yet she wished fervently that they could have spent another hour like the one in the turret summer-house.

Henry was radiant, and as Michael

went off through the postern and down to the little harbor where the boats lay, he asked in fine language what were his beloved's wishes for the afternoon. Sabine felt pettish. She wanted to snap out that she did not care a single sou what they did, but she controlled herself and answered sweetly that she would take him all over the château and ask his opinion and advice about some further improvements she meant to make.

They strolled first to the crenellated wall of the courtyard. Along it there was a high walk, from which you looked down upon the boat-house and the little

jetty; this wall made the fourth side of the courtyard and, with the gate tower and the concierge's tower across the causeway and part of the garden elevation, it was the very oldest of the whole château, and dated from early feudal times.

They leaned upon the stone and looked down at the sea.

"There are only a very few days in the year that the *Minneha-ha* ever comes out of her shed," Sabine said, pointing to the boat-house. "You

cannot imagine what the wind is here—even now it may get up in a few moments on this glassy sea, or thunder may come—and in the autumn, the storms are too glorious. I sit at one of the big windows in my sitting-room and watch the waves for hours; they break on the rocks which stretch out from the tower which is my bedroom, on the Finisterre side, and they rise mountain high. It is a most splendid sight! We are, as it were, in the midst of a cauldron of boiling foam. It exalts and vitalizes me more than I can tell you. I wish it were the autumn now."

"I don't," he said. "I much prefer the summer and peace. I want to take away all that desire for fierce things, dearest—they were the echoes of those dark thoughts and shadows which used to be in your eyes at Carlsbad."

"Ah, if you could!" she sighed.

It was the first time he had ever seen her moved, and it distressed him.

"Do you not think that I can, then?" he asked, tenderly. "It is the only thing I really want in life—to make you happy."

"How good you are, Henry!" she cried. "So noble and unselfish and true! You frighten me; I am just a creature of earth—full of things you may not like when you know me better. I am sure I think of myself more than anyone else—you make me ashamed."

He took her hand and kissed it, while his fine gray eyes melted in worship.

"I will not even listen when you say such things: for me you are perfect—a pearl of great price."

"I must try to be, but I am not." And her voice trembled a little. "I believe I am as full of faults and life as your friend there—Mr. Arranstoun, who I am sure is just a selfish, reckless man."

Michael at this moment reached the boathouse with old Berthe's son, who began to help him to untie the boat he wanted. He looked to be a most splendid creature in his white flannels. He turned and waved to them, and then got in and pulled out a few yards with long, easy strokes.

"Michael is a character," his friend said. "He has been spoiled all his life by women—and fortune. He has a strange story. About five years ago, he married a girl, just to make himself safe from a woman to whom he had been making love. I was awfully angry with him at the time—I was staying in the house and I refused to wait for the wedding. I thought it such a shame to the girl, although it was merely an empty ceremony—but she was awfully young. I believe."

"How interesting!" Sabine's voice was strained. "You saw the girl—what was she like?"

"I never saw her. It was all settled one afternoon when I was out—and

I thought it such a thundering shame that I left that same night."

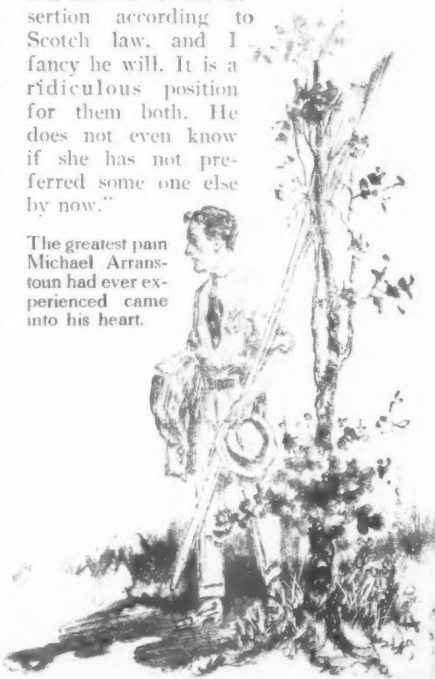
"And if you had stayed—you would have met her! How curious fate is, sometimes—isn't it? Perhaps you could have prevented your friend's being so foolish—if you had stayed."

"Nothing in the world would ever prevent Michael from doing what he wanted to. It is in the blood of all those old border families—heredity again. They flourished by imposing their wills recklessly and snatching and fighting; and who ever survived was a strong man. It has come down to them in force and vigor and daring unto this day."

"But what happened about the marriage?" Sabine asked. "It interests me so much—it sounds so romantic at this matter-of-fact time."

"Nothing happened, except that they went through the ceremony and the girl left at once—that same night. I believe—and Michael has never seen or heard of her since. He tells me the time is up now when he can divorce her for desertion according to Scotch law, and I fancy he will. It is a ridiculous position for them both. He does not even know if she has not preferred some one else by now."

The greatest pain Michael Arranstoun had ever experienced came into his heart.



"Surely she would have given some sign if she had. But perhaps he does not care."

"Not much, I fancy; he amused himself a great deal at Ostende—" And Henry smiled. "He has been away in the wilds for five years and naturally has come back full of zest for civilization."

Sabine's full lips curled, and she looked at the sea again, and the figure in the boat rapidly pulling away from the shore.

"If he chose to leave her alone all these years, he could not expect anything else, could he, than that she would have grown to care for another man?"

"That is what I told him—and he said he was a dog in the manger."

"He did not want her himself, and yet did not wish to give her to anyone else—how disgustingly selfish!"

"Men are proverbially selfish,"—and Henry smiled again; "it is the nature of the creatures."

The violet eyes were glowing as stars might glow could they be angry; their owner turned away from the sea with a fine shrug of her shoulders. Her thoughts were raging. So that was how Michael looked upon the affair! He was just the dog in the manger, and she was the hay! But never, never would she submit to that! She would speak to him when he came in, and ask him to divorce her at once. Why should Henry ever know—even if Scotch divorces were reported she would appear, not as Mrs. Howard, but as Mrs. Arranstoun. Then a discouraging thought came—Sabine was such an uncommon name; if it were not for that, he might never guess. But whether Henry ever knew or did not know, the sooner she were free the better, and then she would marry him and adorn his great position in the world. Michael should see her there, and how well she fulfilled her duties. Even yet she would be able to punish him as he deserved! "Hay," indeed! Never, never, never!

Then she knew she must have been answering some of Lord Fordyce's remarks at random, for a rather puzzled look was on his face. A strong revulsion of feeling came to her. Henry suddenly appeared in his best guise, and a wave

of tenderness for him swept her. How kind and courteous and devoted he was, treating her always as his Queen! She could be sure of homage here; far from being "hay," she would be the most valued jewel in his crown of success. She would rise into spheres where she would be above the paltry emotions caused by a hateful man just because he had "It!"

So she gave her hand to Henry in a burst of exuberance, and let him place it on his arm and lead her back into the château, through all the rooms, where they discussed blues and greens and stuffs and furniture and the lowering of this doorway and the heightening of that, and at last they drifted to the garden and to the lavender hedge—but she would not take him into the summer-house or look out on the sea again.

All through her sweetness, there was a note of unrest. Henry's fine senses told him so, and this left the one drop of bitterness in his otherwise blissful cup.

Michael, meanwhile, was spending his energy and his passion in swift movement in the boat; but after a while he rested on his oars and began to think.

There was no use in going on with the game after all; he ought to go away at once. If he stayed and saw her any more, he would not be able to leave her at all; he knew he would only break his promise to Henry, tell Sabine that he had fallen madly in love with her, implore her to forgive him for everything in the past and let them begin afresh. But he was faced with the horrible thought of the anguish to Henry—Henry, his old friend, who trusted him and who was ten times more worthy of this dear woman than he was himself.

He had never been so full of impotency and misery in his life—not even on that morning in June when he woke and found Sabine had left him—defied him and gone—after everything. Pure rage had come to his aid then, but now he had only remorse and longing, and anger with fate.

"It must all depend on whether or no she loves Henry," he said to himself at last; "and this I will make her tell me this very afternoon."



It was well that Lord Fordyce had gone up to his room, for the Lady of Héronac grew white as death, and then, crumpling the note in her hand, staggered up the old stone steps to her great sitting-room.

But when he got back and went into the garden he happened to witness a scene.

Sabine, overcome with Lord Fordyce's goodness, had let him hold her arm while her head was perilously near his shoulder. It all looked very intimate and lover-like when seen from afar. The greatest pain Michael Arranstoun had ever experienced came into his heart. Without waiting a second, he turned on his heel and went back to the house. There he had a bath and changed his clothes while his servant packed, and then, with the help of Madame Imogen, he looked up a train. Yes, there was a fast one which went to Paris from their nearest little town; he could just catch it by ordering Henry's motor. This he promptly did, and, leaving the best excuses he could invent with Madame Imogen, he departed a few minutes before his hostess and Lord Fordyce came back to tea at five.

He had written a short note to Sabine, which Nicholas handed to her.

She opened it with trembling fingers; this was all it was:

I understand—and I will get the divorce as soon as the law will allow; and I will try to arrange that Henry need never know. I would like you just to have come to Arranstoun once more—perhaps I can persuade Henry to bring you there in the autumn.

MICHAEL ARRANSTOUN.

It was as well that Lord Fordyce had gone up to his room, for the Lady of Héronac grew white as death for a moment, and then, crumpling the note in her hand, staggered up the old stone stairs to her great sitting-room.

So he had gone then, and they could have no explanation. But he had come out of the manger—and was going to let the other animal eat the "hay."

This, however, was very poor comfort and brought no consolation on its wings. Civilization again won the game.

For she had to listen unconcernedly to Madame Imogen's voluble description of Michael's leaving—pressing business about which he had mistaken the date; finally she had to pour tea and smile happily at Henry and Père Anselme.

But when she was at last alone, she flung herself down by the window seat and shook all over with sobs.

Michael's note to Henry was characteristic:

I'm bored, my dear Henry—the picture of your bliss is not inspiring; so I am off to Paris and thence home. I hope you'll think I behaved all right and played the game.

Took your motor to catch train.

Yrs.

M. A.

CHAPTER XII



HE Père Anselme was uneasy. Very little escaped his observation, and he saw at tea that his much loved Dame d'Héronac was not herself. She had not been herself the night before at dinner either—there was more in the coming of these two Englishmen than met the eye. From a corner of the garden, where he was having a heated argument with the gardener in chief, he had seen her with Michael in the morning in the summer-house, as well as when he met them on the causeway bridge. He felt it his duty to do something to smooth matters, but what to do he could not decide. Perhaps she would tell him about it on the morrow, when he met her as was his custom on days that were not saint's days interfered with by mass.

"I shall be at nine o'clock at the gate, *ma fille*," he said, when he wished her good-day. "With your permission, we must decide about the clematis trellis for the north wall without delay."

Henry accompanied the old man on his walk back to the village. They conversed in cultivated and stilted French upon philosophy and of Breton fisher-folk, and of the strange, melancholy characters they seemed to have.

"They look ever out to sea," the priest said; "they are watching the deep waters and are conscious forever of their own and their loved one's dangers; they are *de braves gens*."

"It seems so wonderful that anyone so young and full of life as Mrs. How-

ard should have been drawn to live in such an isolated place, does it not, *mon père!*" Henry asked. "It seems incongruous."

"When she first came she was very sad. She had cause for much sorrow, the dear child—and the sea was her mate; together, she and I, with the sea, have studied many things. She deserves happiness, Monsieur; her soul is as pure and as generous as an angel's—if Monsieur knew what she does for my poor people and for all who come under her care!"

"It will be the endeavor of my life to make her happy, Father." And Lord Fordyce's voice was full of feeling.

"Happiness can only be secured in two ways, my son. Either it comes in the guise of peace, after the flames have burnt themselves out, or it comes through fusion of love at fever heat—"

"Yes?" Henry faltered, rather anxiously.

"When there are still some cinders alight, the peaceful happiness is not quite certain of fulfillment; it becomes an experiment then with some risks."

"What makes you say this to me?"

The old priest did not look at him, but continued to gaze ahead.

"I have the welfare of our Dame d'Héronac very strongly at heart, Monsieur, as you can guess, and I am not altogether sure that the cinders are not still red. It would be well for you to ascertain whether this be so or not, before you ask her to make fresh bonds."

"You think she still cares for her husband, then?" Henry was very pale.

"I do not know that she ever cared, but I do know that even his memory has power to disturb her. He must have been just such another as your friend, the Seigneur of Arranstoun. It is his presence which has reminded her of something of the past, since it cannot be he himself."

"No, of course it cannot be Michael—" And Henry laughed shortly. "He is an Englishman. She had never seen him before yesterday. You think she seems disturbed?"

"Yes."

"What would you have me do, then, Father? I love this woman more than my life, and only desire her happiness."

The Curé of Héronac shrugged his high shoulders slightly.

"It is not for me to give advice to a man of the world, but had it been in the days when I was Gaston d'Héronac, of the Imperial Guard, I should have told you: Use your intelligence, search, investigate for yourself. Make her love you, leave nothing vague or to chance. As a priest, I must say that I find all divorces wrong, and that for me she should remain the wife of the other man."

"Even when the man is a drunkard or a lunatic, and there have been no children?" Henry demanded.

A strange look came in the old Curé's eye, as he glanced at his companion covertly, and for a second it seemed as if he meant to speak his thought; but the only words which came were in Latin:

"Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder." And then he held out his thin, brown hand; they had reached his door.

"In all cases, you have my good wishes, my son, for you seem worthy of her—my good wishes and my prayers."

Lord Fordyce mounted the stairs to his lady's sitting-room with lagging steps. The Père Anselme's advice had caused him to think deeply, and it was necessary that he have speech with Sabine, if she would let him come back into her sitting-room. He knocked at the door softly, as was his way, and when her voice said "*Entrez*" rather impatiently, he did enter and advance with diffidence. She was sitting with her back to the light in one of the great window embrasures, so that he could not see the expression on her face—and her tone became gentle as she welcomed him.

"The evening is so glorious—come and watch the sunset; but there is a little look of thunder there in the far west—to-morrow we may have a storm."

Henry sat down beside her on the orange velvet seat, and his eyes, full of love and tenderness, sought her face beseechingly.

"I shall simply hate going the day after to-morrow, dearest," he said. "If it were not for the sternest duty to my mother, I would ask you to keep me



Sabine looked at him with somber, startled eyes. "You mean, that I decided to help myself,



Father—about the divorce—and that now I must look only to myself. It is a terrible thought."

until Friday. It will be such pain to tear myself away."

"You have been dear," she answered. "You have shown me what real love in a man means, what tenderness and courtesy can make of life. Henry, however wayward I may be, you will bear with me, will you not? I want to be good and happy—" Her sweet voice, with its faintly French accent, was full of pathos, like that of a child who is asking for comfort and sympathy for some threatened hurt. "Oh! I want to be in the sure shelter of your love always, so that storms like that one coming up over there cannot touch me. I want you to make me forget—everything."

He was deeply moved, as he bent and kissed her hands with reverence.

"My darling, you shall indeed be worshiped and protected and kept from all clouds; only first tell me, Sabine, straight from your heart: do you really and truly desire to marry me? I do not ask you to tell me that you love me yet, because I know that you do not—but I want to know the truth. If you have a single doubt whether it is for your happiness, tell it to me—let there be no uncertainties between us. My dear love—"

She was silent for a moment, while his tenderness seemed to be pouring balm upon her troubled spirit.

"My God!" he cried, fearing her silence. "Sabine, speak to me! I will not hold you for a second if you would rather be free, if you think I cannot chase all sad memories away."

She put out her hand and touched his arm.

"If you will be content to take me, knowing that I have things to forget; and if you will help me forget them, then I know that I want to marry you, Henry—just as to-night perhaps that little sail we see out there will long to get into a safe port."

He gave her his promise, with fervently loving words, that he would protect and adore her always, and soothe and cherish her until all haunting memories were gone.

And for the first time since they had known one another, Sabine let him fold her in his arms.

But the lips which he pressed so fondly were cold, like death—and afterwards she went quickly to her room.

The die was irrevocably cast—she could never go back now; she seemed as firmly bound to Henry as if she had been already his wife.

For her nature was tender and honest and true—and Lord Fordyce had touched the highest chord in it, the chord of her soul.

But, as she stood looking from the narrow, deep casement up at the evening sky, suddenly, with terrible vividness, there came back to her mental vision the chapel at Arranstoun on her wedding night, with its gorgeous splendors, and the candles and the lilies and their strong scent, and it was as if she could feel Michael's kiss when the old clergyman's words were done.

She started forward with a little moan, and put her hands over her eyes. Then her will reasserted itself, and her firm lips closed tight.

Nothing should make her waver or alter her mind now, and these fantasies should be ruthlessly stamped out.

She sat down in an armchair, and forced herself to picture her life with Henry. It would be full of such great and interesting things, and he would be the one to guide and protect her always, and keep her from all regrets.

So presently she grew calm and comforted, and by the time she was dressed for dinner, she was even bright and gay, and made a most sweet and gracious mistress of Héronac and of the heart of Henry Fordyce. Just as they were leaving the dining-room, Nicholas brought her a message from Père Anselme, to the effect that a very bad storm was coming up, and she must be sure to have the great iron shutters inside the lower dungeon windows securely closed. He had already told Berthe's son to take in the little boat.

And as they crossed the connecting passage, Madame Imogen gave a scream, for a vivid flash of lightning came in through the open windows, followed by a terrific crash of thunder, and when they reached the sitting-room, the storm had indeed come.

(Continued on page 193 of this issue.)

The Dramatic Cricket

By Freeman Tilden

Author of "The Called Bluff,"
"The Defective," etc.



ILLUSTRATED BY HORACE TAYLOR

J. HOLLISTER BENEDICK, "the freshest hotel clerk on the B. C. & L.," became a sort of national character some months ago, when Freeman Tilden wrote of his adventures in "The Called Bluff," in the RED BOOK. Readers are still chuckling over that story. Here is another of the same brand: the story of J. Hollister's advent into dramatic criticism, on the Maysville Gazette.

J. HOLLISTER BENEDICK, night clerk at the Mansion House in Maysville, had a yearning to be an author. He had maintained this yearning for some time in a slumbering state, but a type-writer salesman named Pettigrew left a book called "The Red Doom," in paper covers, at the hotel, and J. Hollister read it. It brought the night clerk's ambition to a head. All he needed now was something to write about. This drawback is very general among many people who would otherwise do surprisingly well in literature.

The editor of the Maysville *Gazette* was destined to be the man to lead J. Hollister up the giddy heights of Parnassus. His name was Brown. He strolled into the hotel one afternoon, opened the register and looked over the names inscribed there during the past three days.

"Nothing important that I see," was his comment to J. Hollister.

"Maybe not to you," replied the night clerk, "but they're important to us. You don't care anything about those fellows. They're traveling men. But you bet this hotel wouldn't do business long if we waited for your important folks."

The editor considered the statement judicially. Then he assented, "I guess you're right."

After a silence, the editor asked: "Did you ever write anything for a newspaper, Mr. Benedick?"

The night clerk would have given his week's wages to be able to say "Yes," but he was in the presence of a connoisseur of literary effort, and he knew it. He admitted that he had not.

"Well," replied Mr. Brown, to the infinite delight of the hotel clerk, "that isn't saying you can't. I s'pose there's teamsters and milkmen that could beat

me all hollow if they got a chance." After which modest statement, he looked out the window with the air of a man too great to contain petty egotism.

"I'd like to write," ventured J. Hollister, "if I only had a chance."

"You strike me as being a pretty bright fellow," said the editor, "—even if they do say you're the freshest thing between Eddysburg and Newbury." He took a couple of pasteboards from his vest pocket and held them tantalizingly under J. Hollister's nose. "Do you suppose you'd want to go to that show at the Town Hall to-night and write about twenty-five lines about it? I generally take in the shows myself; but my wife isn't well and I don't like to leave her alone nights. Think you could?"

Think he could? J. Hollister had palpitation of the heart for several seconds. Would he do it? Would a bell-hop take a tip? He reached out for the tickets, and was almost surprised when he found them in his hand.

It wasn't merely the free tickets, though J. Hollister liked to enjoy the kingly privilege of dead-heading as well as anyone. It was the joy of sitting in journalistic judgment down front in the orchestra, and putting thoughts into print and circulating them throughout a waiting world. Less ingenuous people than J. Hollister have felt the lure of it.

J. Hollister got permission from Weatherbee, the proprietor of the Mansion House, to be away during the evening. Harry Delormie, rival typewriter salesman to the man that left a copy of "The Red Doom" with the night clerk, was in town. J. Hollister did the honors.

The show was bad—very bad. Without being a James Huneker or a John Corbin, the night clerk was endowed with some discrimination. Even the population of Maysville, which could sit through "Uncle Tom" or "East Lynne" with a certain degree of pleasure, balked at "The Peevish Princess."

The night clerk went back to the hotel in a mighty quandary. He was astonished to find what a difficult thing it is to "start" anything. Weatherbee's hotel stationery flew around like giant

snowflakes: J. Hollister chewed the ends off two pencils and sharpened them down several inches apiece; yet at the hour of midnight he had not discovered that felicitous opening sentence for which he had been looking. He pored over the opening sentences of all the chapters of "The Red Doom," and even referred to a chance copy of "The Rosary," but they didn't help.

At 1:30 A. M., an hour when usually he was asleep, J. Hollister rose wearily from the little table in his room, and sighed. "I'm a flivver," he said. "What a bonehead I must have been to think I could write! That's what I get for having a swelled bean!" He looked mournfully at a sheet of paper on the table. On it was written, with many erasures and interpolations:

There was a show put on at the Town Hall last night, the name of it being "The Peevish Princess." The Princess was peevish, all right, but she was nothing to the people out in front. Judging from last night, this show is going to be decreasingly popular.

More than this, J. Hollister could not write. He was disgusted. He turned out the light and went to bed.

The next thing the hotel clerk knew, it was getting-up time. He was awakened by a laugh, and he heard somebody say, "That aint half bad, now." J. Hollister turned over and saw the editor of the *Gazette* standing over the table, reading the bit of dramatic criticism. The night clerk reddened.

"Excuse me, Mr. Benedick," said the editor, "but Weatherbee said it would be all right for me to come right up to your room. We're going to press in a few minutes, and I wanted to get your notice of the show. Rotten, wasn't it? So I heard. Well, you could have done worse by writing more. 'Decreasingly popular.' I like that. Where'd you hear it? Never mind, a good thing belongs to everybody that wants to use it. So long."

J. Hollister was relieved but amazed. It was incredible that this miserable failure should satisfy. "Wait a minute, Mr. Brown," he called. "Do you really like that thing?"

"Yes."

J. Hollister gulped. "Do — do you think I could ever make a dramatic cricket?" "Critic" was one of the words J. Hollister couldn't say. We all have our little difficulties.

The editor grinned. "I don't see why not." Then he went out.

The town of Maysville sported one of those nondescript so-called "pleasure resorts" that every thriving country town

orange peel and other articles calculated to give the place a woodsy atmosphere. Arbor Park was connected with the village by a trolley line.

It was June; and a season of "high class drama" had opened in the out-door theatre in Arbor Park. Every night, weather permitting, a good many of the people of Maysville "took in" the show. The company was one of those marvelous aggregations of barn-stormers, led by an ancient hamfatter named Junius



Junius would bask in his own radiance and recount his happy days with John McCullough.

acquires sooner or later. It was called Arbor Park; and Maysville wore it in its corporate buttonhole with something of a swagger. It was one of those places to which people go because they don't realize how comfortable they are at home. It consisted of a clump of aged pines, a dancing pavilion, out-door theatre, several popcorn booths, and a lot of wooden seats arranged for basket parties. The floor of the park was carpeted with pine-needles, peanut shells,

Hamilton Haynes. Mr. Haynes was of the old school. He remembered Booth and Barrett, and would have acted with them both if they had said the word. When mellowed slightly with drug-store spirits, Junius would bask in his own radiance and recount his happy days with John McCullough.

Junius Hamilton Haynes was strong for the classics. He had a leaning toward Shakespeare, and it rather hurt him to play frivolities like "Charlie's

Aunt" and "The Silver Dagger." But Shakespeare wrote very few plays that can be produced by a cast of six persons, three male, three female—even with the help of local talent. The other two males, and the three females, may as well be introduced right here. They were: Barrett Macready Haynes, Mrs. Junius Hamilton Haynes, Miss Dora Haynes, Miss Gwendolyn Haynes, and Mr. George J. Wittston.

With one more child of his own, Junius could have got along without Mr. Wittston: that is, so far as Mr. Wittston's abilities were concerned. But George J. had other merits. He came to the "Haynes Dramatic Stock Company" with a dowry of five hundred dollars, in response to an advertisement for a treasurer with that amount. Soon after his advent with the company, the young man was permitted to become an actor, and the position of treasurer passed almost imperceptibly into the hands of the ancient tragedian and friend of McCullough. And, since by this time

the five hundred dollars had become a sort of honorarium attached to the office of treasurer, Mr. Wittston now was in possession only of his Art.

It could not be denied that the "Haynes Dramatic Stock Company" was composed of bad actors. Very bad. But their badness was that frank, hearty, noisy kind of badness that does not seem so bad to a man who sits in an out-door theatre after a nine-hour day in a machine shop. So, at twenty and thirty cents, they did pretty well. They were on their second week when J. Hollister Benedict, new-fledged dramatic

cricket (he simply could not get that word) of the Maysville *Gazette*, came out to Arbor Park.

There was nothing vicious about J. Hollister. Fresh as he undoubtedly was, he would not intentionally wound a soul. But he was now constituted censor of the dramatic morals of the township, and he felt that much devolved on him. Also, he intuitively understood what many greater dramatic critics know: that favorable criticism is never so readable as unfavorable and slashing criticism, and cannot get one-tenth the at-

tention. So he proceeded to maul the poor Haynes family. It happened that Brown, the editor of the *Gazette*, was at odds with the electric light and power company that ran the park, and was glad to print anything that might sting his foes. They wouldn't advertise. So, J. Hollister got a free hand.

The night clerk attended "Lady Bellwood's Sin" on Wednesday; the *Gazette* appeared on Friday morning; and on Friday afternoon, a few minutes

after J. Hollister had gone on duty, relieving Hopkins, the day man, a tall, dignified figure entered the hotel and strode to the desk. It was Junius Hamilton Haynes. It was Junius in his well-preserved silk hat. It was Junius with a frown, a grievance and a copy of the *Gazette*.

"I am informed, sir," began the friend of McCullough, laying the copy of the newspaper down before J. Hollister, "that you perpetrated that damnable outrage."

J. Hollister looked at the paper, which was opened to his dramatic criti-



"Cut out that stuff, you big lobster. You can't bluff me."

cism, and turned red. He had not expected to be confronted by his victims. He had a vague idea that newspaper men were protected, in some mysterious manner, from coming in actual contact with the objects of their editorial ironies. But he replied, with as much nonchalance as he could muster, "I'm your man. I'm the cricket of the *Gazette*."

A lean, scornful smile played around the mouth of the actor. "The cricket!" he exclaimed. "The cricket on the hearth or what?" J. Hollister blushed redder. How many weary minutes had he spent practicing that word! And now it had undone him in the presence of an enemy.

Junius Hamilton Haynes felt his stock rising, as he perceived the discomfiture of the hotel clerk. He felt that he could advance. "How dare you, sir," he went on, "you—a mere hotel clerk, libel a company of artists! I have a mind to chastise you on the spot!" And he raised his cane threateningly.

Junius, like most people who take themselves over-seriously, went too far. J. Hollister had been taken aback; but he knew now that the tragedian was bluffing. He grasped the arm of the actor and whispered, "Cut that stuff, you big lobster! You can't bluff me. I'll come out to your show to-night and pan it to a crisp."

There were more words, angry words. The end of it was that Mr. Haynes went away breathing maledictions and possible vengeance; and J. Hollister, on his side, was taken to task by Weatherbee, the proprietor, for having an altercation in the hotel lobby. When informed of the subject matter of the dispute he was no better satisfied. Mr. Weatherbee took no stock in dramatic criticism, or dramatic effort of any kind. He had an idea that a hotel clerk ought to be content with the altitude of his position and leave outside jobs alone.

But J. Hollister was wrought up. He had been bearded in his great office. So he was true to his word. He obtained reluctant permission to be away a couple of hours that night, and sat through one act of an abbreviated "Blue Jeans," as rendered by the Haynes family and Mr. Wittston. Then he "panned them."

The *Gazette's* dramatic critic intimated, in a brief recital of the performance, that the leading man would do well to take up blacksmithing as a vocation, that the leading woman was perhaps a motherly soul but might well be presiding at the kitchen range, and that Barrett Macready Haynes and George J. Wittston ought to be made to go to work or sent to the Town Farm.

The Misses Haynes escaped the venom of J. Hollister's wrath, because—why deny the truth?—because they were youngish, and fair to look upon, so far as he could judge from aisle 7, seat 14. Of such is the kingdom of dramatic criticism.

But of one thing J. Hollister was just as unaware as the lowliest inhabitant of the twenty-cent seats. He did not know that all these members of the Haynes Dramatic Company, except Mr. Wittston, were also members of the same family. The real truth was as follows:

(In real life)	equals	(On the program)
Junius Hamilton Haynes	"	Junius Hamilton Haynes
Mrs. Junius H. Haynes	"	Ethelle St. John
Barrett Macready Haynes	"	Walter Booth
Miss Dora Haynes	"	Virginia Fairfax
Miss Gwendolyn Haynes	"	Alyce Jefferson

There was method in this madness on the part of the friend of McCullough. He knew what the rural spectator, especially of the feminine gender, loves to imagine that the actors and actresses are secretly in love with each other, in pairs. The thrill that vibrates through the audience when the heroine offers her red lips for the passionate kiss would be a mighty thin thrill if it were known that Barrett Haynes was kissing his sister, and that when he turned away it was not to hide his emotions but to wipe his mouth on his sleeve.

But the point is, that J. Hollister in his bitterness avoided mention of the two young women, and he privately felt that in so doing he was something of a cavalier.

The next Friday afternoon, a few hours after the publication of the *Gazette*, Barrett Macready Haynes flitted into the Mansion House with the mincing step of a lineal descendant of the

actor-writer of Avon. After certain private deliberations on the part of the Haynes Dramatic Stock Company, it had been decided that Barrett should demand a public apology from the night clerk and dramatic critic. Failing in this, there was some vague notion of slapping somebody's face with a glove, and initiating a duel. No genuine duel could possibly be effected in the town of Maysville; but the advertising that might accrue from the preliminary challenges was calculated to pack the seats of the out-door theatre for the remaining three weeks of the engagement.

This would have been a great bit of press-agent work if Barrett had had the courage of an ordinary Jersey cow. But he lacked it. So, when J. Hollister Benedick was accosted by the injured actor with the words: "Are you the person that wrote that article in the newspaper?" and had replied, hardily, "You've guessed it!" the young Mr. Haynes suddenly observed that the night clerk was about six feet tall and weighed in the neighborhood of a hundred and eighty-five pounds. Thereupon Barrett put his gloves in his pocket where they could not forget themselves and slap anybody's face.

The interview, which was conducted in the presence of several mirth-choked traveling men, was brief.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself for writing that kind of rot about our people," asservated Barrett. "Why, we played to standing room up at Newbury last summer for seven weeks, and we've got letters asking us to come back there when we close at Arbor Park."

"The people up at Newbury are nuts," replied J. Hollister. "You can't put nothing over on me. I know acting when I see it."

"Anyway," said Barrett, "you don't hurt our business. We're filling the house every night, rain or shine. The people don't take any stock in what a bum rag like the *Gazette* says."

That shot stopped J. Hollister for a moment. He knew it was true. He had done some wondering about this phenomenon himself. But he rallied:

"The poor dubs have no other place to go."

"Yah—yah!" retorted the actor, heading for the door. It was not an intelligent piece of repartee, but it riled the night clerk. He came out from behind the desk, as though ready to give battle; but when he reached the sidewalk the actor was disappearing around the corner. Thus closed the second attempt to browbeat the free press—the unmuzzled Fourth Estate. And the following Friday the "cricket" of the *Gazette* laid on the lash pitilessly.

Enter now, one afternoon about a week before the engagement of the Haynes Dramatic Stock Company was to come to an end, Miss Virginia Fairfax. In private life, of course, she was Miss Dora Haynes. In a hat that was of the latest design, with one of those vertical feathers never worn by bird or beast, and just as dashing as her brief stature of five feet six permitted, and just as fresh and pretty as a young woman of twenty-two can be when she is really fresh and pretty, she lighted up the lobby of the Mansion House with an unusual feminine glow.

J. Hollister had just come behind the desk, and he saw her enter. He recognized her instantly; and his first thought was a mental exclamation that she looked far prettier off the stage than on. Also he felt a tendency on the part of his backbone to creep. "If she should have a crying spell!" he thought, anxiously.

Dora had not come to cry. She was the last resort of the Haynes Dramatic Stock Company. She was a diplomatic representative, and she came with an olive branch in one hand and a loaded club in the other. This is speaking metaphorically, but the idea is plain.

Dora had that type of brown, liquid eyes that say, innocently, to all the viewing world: "I could learn to love you." And that add, just as innocently, "Only you." A group of traveling salesmen, chattering at the end of the cigar case, removed their hats and tried to look fatherly and protective. Dora seemed not to see them. She was looking for the "cricket" of the *Gazette*.

"Are you Mr. Benedick?" she asked demurely.

"Yes, ma'am—Miss," replied J. Hollister.

"Might I speak a few words with you in the parlor?"

"Certainly." And they went up to the second floor and into that dreariest of all dens, the hotel parlor. J. Hollister waited till the actress was seated, and then poised himself awkwardly on the edge of a plush covered chair.

"My card," began the young woman, proffering that object.

"I'd know you anywhere," said the night clerk hastily.

"Thank you, Mr. Benedick." (Demurely—oh!) J. Hollister took courage. He felt that he had hit the bullseye of diplomacy.

"Of course I don't need to say," began the young woman, "that some of the things you have written in the *Gazette* have been rather hard on us. No—please let me say what I have in mind," she begged, as the night clerk, blushing fiery, would have interrupted. "Of course it has made us feel a little bad; but we admire you for your courage. When people say what they really think, they deserve credit."

J. Hollister studied the carpet design,

and wished himself elsewhere. (She was so ladylike about it!)

"And then," Dora went on, "you're really witty. There's no denying that. Why, we had to laugh ourselves, at some of the things you said. You have such a funny way of putting things. Of course, Mr. Haynes was disturbed; we have our living to make, you realize; and we depend on popular support. Well, we close this week. I just came to tell you that Mr. Haynes and Mr. Booth are very sorry for what they have said to you, and wish me to extend their apologies. And I—I—" (with the rosiest of cheeks!) "I just wanted to see you. Just to get a close look at the man that had said such naughty things about us." She laughed. "You don't mind, do you? I haven't wasted too much of your time?"

J. Hollister was crushed. The steam-roller of beauty had come behind him on the dramatic highway, and pancaked him in his tracks. He gurgled. "Oh, Miss Fairfax!" That was all he could say.

Under the pretence of shaking hands in farewell, Dora got possession of a cold paw belonging to the hotel clerk, and retained it long enough to damage an equilibrium belonging to that same hotel clerk. Then she started for the elevator. But she paused on the threshold, and said to the silent, speechless one behind her:



"And then," Dora went on, "you're really witty. There's no denying that."

"Oh, yes; I almost forgot. You've acted, haven't you?"

"Acted?" was the reply of genuine surprise. "N-no. Why?"

"Why, we all agreed—all the members of the company—that the man that wrote those reviews must have been an actor sometime himself. We thought you had probably done a comedy part."

For an instant J. Hollister was sus-

ence, the personality, and the — well, practically everything but the experience. Why don't you try it sometime?"

"Aw, me?" was J. Hollister's reply, in self-deprecation.

"He lacks confidence in himself," muttered Dora, as though talking to herself.

Now the fact was that J. Hollister, in company with about sixty-odd mil-



J. Hollister was learning the ropes.

picious of a scheme (as he expressed it afterward) to "kid" him. But no; the face was demure as ever, and the eyes especially sincere.

"Never was on the stage in my life," averred the night clerk.

"I am surprised," said Dora. Then she added, "You ought to be. I don't mind telling you—you've got the pres-

lion other residents of the United States, had long been persuaded that if he ever wanted to, and got the chance, he could show most of these actors a few things. At least, he knew he couldn't be any worse than some he had seen taking money for treading the boards. For an instant he wondered....

And in that instant he was lost.

Without knowing just how it happened, J. Hollister apprenticed himself to the Haynes Dramatic Stock Company for the remaining week of their engagement. He was to be permitted to rehearse with the company, to watch them from behind the scenes, and to get ready for a dazzling début on the last Saturday night of the company at the park. It was understood that he was a green hand, and couldn't expect to make his première before that time. He himself admitted that a week's preparation was none too short.

It was necessary to get Weatherbee's permission to take a week off. This was hard to get; at first the hotel proprietor was flat-footedly against it. But he had the alternative of granting the vacation or losing his night clerk, and as J. Hollister was really an asset to the Mansion House, the deal finally went through. Thus became J. Hollister an actor, within a few weeks of becoming dramatic critic.

"You might try it this way, Mr. Benedick."

"Don't you think the lines should be read more like this, Mr. Benedick?"

"That's the stuff; you've got it in you, Mr. Benedick."

J. Hollister was learning the ropes. No people could be kinder, or more helpful to the young neophyte than the members of the Haynes Dramatic Stock Company. J. Hollister wondered, with shame, how he could ever satisfy his conscience for "roasting" them the way he had done. But they never mentioned the subject. They were the most magnanimous people in the world.

And Dora Haynes—words could not express the clerk's growing admiration for that lovely little person. She was a perfect lady, he saw plainly. Nothing forward about her. J. Hollister had heard queer stories about stage people. He was forced to conclude either that they were mostly libels, or that these particular representatives were extraordinary. And with some relief, after watching them narrowly, he saw that Walter Booth and Virginia Fairfax were not in love. He had feared this.

The night clerk never worked harder

in his life than during that exciting week. Even the tawdry, diminutive theatre connected with Arbor Park had something wonderfully romantic about it; and J. Hollister caught the lure of the game. It is a kind of gypsy life after all; the night clerk was young.

The Saturday night show was to be a farce called "William's Overshoes." It called for two female characters and three males. J. Hollister was to be *Martin Miggles*, a regular cut-up. This part suited the night clerk, who felt that he was something of a cut-up himself. Walter Booth (who was Barrett Macready Haynes, though J. Hollister didn't know it yet) was *The Rev. Alfred Hastings*, a young divine in love with *Pearl Bloodgood*, sister of *William Bloodgood*, owner of the overshoes mentioned in the title. It was a rollicking farce, of the kind that plays to standing room in Pomona Grange halls, after doing service in the "legitimate."

J. Hollister studied hard. By Saturday morning he was letter-perfect. He was also nervous. But all the members of the company told him that this was a symptom that would pass away when he once got launched. He tried to believe it. But once in a while his knees got out of control, when he thought of the crowd out in front.

We now approach, with due solemnity, the moment when J. Hollister was to make the drama famous. Enemies of the night clerk might have reveled in the thought that he would collapse of stage-fright, the moment he showed himself to the crowd. They would have been disappointed. "The freshest hotel clerk along the B. C. & L." had plenty of nerve. And he believed in himself, which is the main thing. And he had a good memory, which is important. During the first two acts he gave the Haynes Dramatic Stock Company the surprise of their lives.

The company had been prepared for a fall-down. They didn't care; it was their last night, and the best kind of advertising for a return engagement. It would be at J. Hollister's expense, not theirs.

So they were surprised utterly when

The Café of the Plague

By L. J. Beeston

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK CRAIG

NOT since "Zenda" and "Rupert of Hentzau" have we had stories such as the adventures of that gallant swordsman, Count Saros. His is the sort of blade that would have fought like steel inspired for Flavia; and what a consort for her would Nicolas of Assila have been! Stories for folks with good red blood in their veins and a love of romance in their hearts are these—a wonderful tonic in these days of drab lives and loves.

TWO men sat in the Café of the Plague, nearly two hours on the dead side of midnight, drinking iced pomegranate syrup.

The name of the café is not charming? That is not my fault. You will find it in that quarter of Assila's capital which corresponds with the Montmartre of Parisians.

The two men discussed the approaching marriage of Nicolas of Assila with the Princess Sereine, whose beauty had the worth of her rank. One of them had an unquestioned right of discussion, for he was Nicolas himself; and it seemed as if he loved her, for he said to his companion:

"Her hair is the night sky."

The other combated a yawn.

"Her eyes, are its inextinguishable fires."

The other sighed.

"Her soul is its harmony."

I pardoned this high flight into meta-

phor. Why not? I—Count Martin Valentine Saros—loved also. My Katrine—but I will spare your imagination. This story is of a king's love, not mine.

He went on:

"There is but one blossom missing in her heart, one pearl which the string lacks, one note which might make this chord perfect—to me."

"And that, sire?"

"She does not love me, Martin."

I made a deprecatory gesture.

"It is perfectly true."

He spoke sadly, almost gloomily, stretching his long legs under the granite-topped table. And was it a sure truth which he uttered? Possibly. And did he know that the name of Lieutenant Wolfgang Muller was sometimes whispered in that regard? Questionable. And was there any basis of fact under those whispers that the Princess Sereine loved Muller? *Pardi*, the devil only knows. And was it truth or a lie that the Princess' favorite lady-in-waiting, the Mar-



A man who was wearing a long blue coat, who looked like a military officer, and who was a little intoxicated, was sitting in a corner and trying to sing that naughty song of Maupassant's which begins, "For three years I spent"

quise Olga, sister to Wolfgang Muller, looked with a more than kindly eye on Count Saros—*moi?* Well, when I have played you an intermezzo of just half a minute's duration, I will come back to that.

Here is my intermezzo. One tender

spring day Nicolas of Assila wedded the Princess Sereine, made her his consort, his Queen. The guns on the ramparts roared, shaking the trees, the trees which were covered with a green haze, with a fragile shower of emerald beauty.

That was six months ago. And now

the clerk proved to be what the *Gazette* would call, in reference to local shows, "a talented amateur." You would have thought they would be delighted, as at a pleasant disappointment. Not so. It really seemed as if they had hoped the contrary. Curious world, this.

During the intermission between the second and third, or last, acts, Mr. Junius Hamilton Haynes and Mr. Walter Booth retreated to a far corner and talked "an aside." Suddenly Mr. Booth might have been seen to grin and nod. A moment afterward Junius grinned and nodded. Then the bell rang, and the curtain went up.

Now follow closely. Remember that J. Hollister is *Martin Miggles*, and that Walter Booth is the *Rev. Alfred Hastings*. Bear in mind that the first words spoken by the *Rev. Hastings* are the words that belong in the play, and the italicized words in brackets, did not belong in the play, but were injected in undertones by Mr. Booth for a purpose. We now proceed:

MIGGLES. The shoes were in the closet last time I saw them, Mr. Hastings.

HASTINGS. I think you must be mistaken, sir. (*You've forgotten your lines, you big boob. You're half-dead now, and don't know it.*)

MIGGLES. Positive of it. I saw them there yesterday. (*What d'ye mean? I'm all right.*)

HASTINGS. Then Alfred must have had his father's shoes on. (*You don't know what's coming next, you bum. The people out there are all ready to go to your funeral.*)

MIGGLES. I—I—tell you, Mr. Hastings—

HASTINGS. (*You've lost it, you poor fool. You'd better do a song and dance now.*)

J. Hollister paused. He was bewildered. The undertone remarks of Mr. Booth were unexpected and brutal. The clerk wondered for just a second if he really had misplaced his lines. Then he tried to regain his poise and failed. The next word had gone. He stood for several seconds with his mouth half-open, the other actor whispering cruel suggestions all the while.

Suddenly a boy in the twenty-cent seats bawled, "What's the matter, you rummy? Are you tongue-tied?"

An audience is quick to perceive difficulties like this. Almost simultaneously a big man, only several rows from the stage, bellowed: "Spit it out, boy; spit it out." Then something very closely resembling a banana skin flew toward the stage. It *was* a banana skin, and it went close to J. Hollister's ear.

The growing disturbance could have been quelled, perhaps, by quick work on the part of Junius Hamilton Haynes. But that individual never lifted his finger. In another minute the show was a riot.

They still talk about that Saturday night in Maysville. Another generation or two, and the oldest inhabitants will be relating to their grand-children how one J. Hollister Benedick forgot his lines; how an audience composed of simple mill-town folk stamped their feet and screamed themselves hoarse; how the eminent tragedian Junius Hamilton Haynes suddenly appeared on the stage, the tears of mingled joy and laughter streaming down his cheeks, and led a talented but dazed amateur actor behind the scenes; and how J. Hollister Benedick sought for two hours in blood-thirsty vain for one Walter Booth, the author of the downfall.

The Haynes Dramatic Stock Company came back for a return engagement in the late summer and played to capacity for three weeks. This was partly due to the advertising they got by word of mouth. But it was greatly due to a review of the performance that appeared in the *Gazette* of the following week. The review was written by J. Hollister and made the biggest hit of his dramatic career. It rehabilitated him in public esteem. It almost made a hero of him. This is what he wrote:

The Haynes Dramatic Stock Company closed its engagement at Arbor Park last Saturday night by presenting a farce, "William's Overshoes." This show was the biggest hit of any played by this stock company. The people got up and yelled toward the end of the performance, and in the third act really stopped the show, their enthusiasm got so



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big. The acting was excellent, all except that of the one who took the part of *Miggles*. This part was played by the well known night clerk at the Mansion House, our popular hotel conducted by the genial boniface, Mr. J. K. Weatherbee. The night clerk is pretty good when he is on his regular job. He ought to stick to it. He will. He is all done with shows and show people, and will be found on and after this date at his old stand at the Mansion House. It is said that Mr. Weatherbee intends to build an addition to the Mansion House in

the fall, to accommodate his growing business.

As a piece of dramatic criticism this is not classic. But it made a great hit. It pleased the people; it appeased Mr. Weatherbee; and it cost J. Hollister nothing but a temporary chill. And Miss Virginia Fairfax, otherwise Miss Dora Haynes, on receiving a marked copy of the *Gazette* containing the review, wrote J. Hollister a letter on pink stationery gently odorized with New-Mown-Hay. This letter is not for publication.

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That was six months ago. And now

come back with me, if you please, to that same café, that Café of the Plague, where the same two men sit as before, only the face of Nicolas is rather more sad, almost stern; and he stares fixedly at his glass of pomegranate syrup, which has the color of pigeon's blood.

You who have heard from me the passion of Nicolas for nocturnal adventure, and his friendship which so honored me, a poor master of sword thrusts, will comprehend our being in the café, two hours on the dead side of midnight, as before.

A man who was wearing a long blue coat, who looked like a military officer, and who was a little intoxicated, was sitting in a corner and trying to sing that naughty song of Maupassant's which begins, "For three years I spent. . . ."

Then there was quite a nice girl who had been brought here as a piece of deviltry by her sweetheart, whose diamond studs flamed in his evening dress shirt. The stolen enjoyment had flushed the girl's face, though she was obviously scared.

Now and again one heard a shout which seemed to come from some room overhead. I wondered if the nice girl knew that the proprietor kept a secret faro bank up there.

Nicolas declined to break a long, long silence. Shadows deepened on his face. Had he won the love of his queen whom he adored? I could not think so. The name of Lieutenant Wolfgang Muller was still breathed by the evil-minded. At any rate, he kept himself in the background in his country. I had not seen him, but I had heard of him, and of his way of defending his morals with his sword, with certain facial thrusts that had gained him a feared reputation.

Suddenly Nicolas' face cleared, and a smile illumined it as he said abruptly:

"The stars in their courses are kind to you, Count. It is said that the Marquise Olga has a *grande passion* for my *maitre d'ecrime*. Beware, for her eyes are brighter than your rapiers."

I echoed his laugh, only too pleased to hear it. All the same, you will understand, the report was one which I treated with contempt. Who wanted the Marquise Olga? *Pardi*, not I!

The man in the blue coat abruptly shouted at the top of his lungs: "In a beautiful bed—in a splendid alcove. . ."

The young couple went out.

"The marquise is handsome?" went on Nicolas.

"So is the devil."

"Her husband is dead?"

"He should not complain."

"Bah, how incorrigible—"

He stopped as some one touched me on the shoulder. It was Antoine, my servant. He knew few of my haunts, and to have ferreted me out here suggested urgent business. Whether or no he knew Nicolas, who was slightly disguised, I cannot tell; but he kept his eyes fixed only on my face as he handed me a dainty pink envelope which bore an even daintier handwriting. The message was as follows:

Count Saros has a strong arm, a silent tongue, a courteous heart. A lady who has need of these treasures beseeches him to be in the shadow of the porch of the Church of St. Peter in Chains when two o'clock sounds.

Your sincere friend,

O.

I nodded Antoine off and handed the letter to Nicolas. I expected a laugh and was not disappointed. He exclaimed: "A strange trysting-place, by Capo!"

"It is none, sire."

"The writing of the Marquise Olga?"

"She knows that I detest her."

"You will disappoint her, then?"

"With your permission I will see what she wants."

"My poor Saros is suffering from blindness. But go."

"And you, sire?"

"I shall not stay."

The shadows descended again upon his spirits. I went out, passing the tipsy officer, who was shouting, "If wine makes you thirsty, yet love. . . ." From the room above came an excited cry, the stamping of feet of maddened players.

The mentioned hour of two was over and gone, but that could not be helped. I was eager to obey the request, for it seemed to me to strike a deep note. I hurried to the Church of St. Peter in Chains.

It flung a shadow broad and deep, in which waited an unpretentious one-horse carriage. A hand waved to me from inside this carriage. I climbed in. In the dark interior I could just see the figures of two ladies. One pressed my hand. She whispered: "For God's sake do not address my companion. A thousand thanks for coming." That was the voice of the Marquise Olga.

I returned the pressure of her gloved fingers. Had the contact any thrill for me? By no means. My heart was with my Katrine. A man comes near to hating any woman who flings herself at him when he adores another. But I squeezed the palm in mine. I even raised it to my lips because I was suddenly seized with a burning desire to probe this mystery, because I was suddenly weighted down by apprehension for Nicolas' sake.

A subtle perfume of verbenas drifted about the inside of the carriage. It was the favourite perfume of—*diable*, I do not like to write her name down. But I trembled for Nicolas and his great love for his Queen.

We drove through the streets, which were silent as the night fields, and covered with the sheen of the moon, with that mournful sheen which is reflected from a dead world, from a dead orb.

I heard a sound now and again like a repressed sob of anguish, which came from the lady opposite to us, whose figure was wrapped in a black cloak, whose hair was covered by a filmy covering of lace, whose face was buried under a black veil. Some emotion was racking her heart. Where was she going at this desolate hour? What appointment called her? Perhaps some one she loved was ill, was dying? Perhaps she was leaving, for a lover's sake, her husband?

We plunged into narrow purlieus bearing the insignia of poverty. A slinking form of a night vagabond showed here and there. I understood that a male protector was needed. The Marquise, helping her friend in this adventure, had thought of me. But I thought of Nicolas, and wondered if the Marquise would find me on this occasion the right friend for the purpose afoot.

The voice of the Marquise Olga whispered into my left ear:

"You are curious, *mon ami*?"

"I am at your commands, Marquise," I replied in the same very low tone.

"I will reward you!"

"Your confidence is a rich recompense."

She pressed up a little closer so that her veiled cheek almost touched mine. Her cloak had fallen open at her throat. She had underneath, a beautiful evening robe of saffron-colored silk, with red Malmaisons at her bosom, at her white bosom which rose and fell under the stress of excited breathing.

She murmured: "There are some names which we may not utter at times like this, but we may hazard a guess. You are not denied that privilege. And it is of vital importance that you guess rightly, for if danger menaces, you must not hesitate to risk your life in defense of—of—" She finished the sentence by glancing at her silent companion in the corner.

I inclined my head. It was true, then, my deadly fear. A lover's meeting. How could I look Nicolas in the eyes again?

The Marquise continued, in a still lower tone:

"He is very ill. She is going to see him."

"Wolfgang Muller?" There was something of a snarl in my voice.

"Hush! Did I not say that names must not be mentioned?"

"Ah, pardon me."

"Yes, yes; a thousand times, *mon cher*. Every time you asked me to forgive you I would—I would—"

At that interesting juncture the carriage stopped.

We were before a gaunt house seven stories high—a monstrous tenement house which had no outer door, and up which a stone staircase spiraled into darkness. My companions permitted me to assist them to alight. She whose name I must not mention ran swiftly into the house. The carriage waited.

"Follow me, Count," begged the Marquise, who was now greatly agitated.

She flitted up the dingy stairway after that other. At a height of four of five landings she paused and faced me.

"Do not come any further," she implored, panting for breath.

"And you, Marquise?"

"I am going after—her. Wait here. If anyone comes you will not allow them to pass up higher."

"Be assured."

She disappeared in the gloom of the remaining flight. I was alone. A window lighted this landing, a dingy window which permitted a glimpse of the deserted street far down, and the roofs of the opposite houses.

Now what ought I to do? I confess the question harassed me more than a trifle. To play the spy was the obvious thing, but an idea which cut dead across the grain. After all, if the brother of the Marquise, if Lieutenant Muller, was really very ill, then there was nothing but imprudence, though an insane imprudence, in this visit of one who loved him, who was torn by grief, by all the agony of love which sees its star approached by the eclipse from which it can never emerge.

Had I any right to intrude at such a time, on such an occasion? I shrank from it.

I peered down into the street and perceived the carriage waiting. The horse neighed. A couple of cats flitted across the opposite roof.

Suddenly down the staircase floated a sharp scream, followed instantly by the crash of some piece of furniture being overturned. A woman cried out in a voice of terror. I turned to dash up the flight when I saw a figure rushing down, almost stumbling upon the narrow steps, and clutching at the handrail. This figure of a frightened, of a horribly frightened woman was covered by a black cloak, a black veil, a lace shawl over her hair. She uttered a sobbing cry. Her nerve was gone; she had altogether lost her head. She cowered, catching sight of me, but when I drew back she darted past me, leaving in the air that subtle perfume of verberna. From the upstairs room which she had presumably quitted came the sound of uproar.

The woman in black flitted down the long flights. As for me, my way of duty was perceptible enough, you will admit. I followed. At all costs I must protect that frightened heart, must guard it from the least hurt, must shadow it at all

risks from the most momentary discovery.

When she ran from the house I was but a yard behind. I leaped to the carriage door, which I wrenched open. The woman in black climbed in, sank upon the cushioned seat. I took the other. The coachman seemed not altogether unprepared for such an exigency as this. Anyhow, he had his orders, for he lashed at his animals and away we went like a hurricane, the vehicle lurching from side to side, crashing over the uneven cobles.

The woman leaned back, pressing her hands to her bosom, panting for breath, in a well-nigh fainting condition. I maintained a silence absolute. The least word would have been an indiscretion at such a moment. I was tortured by a frightful fear that she had been recognized by some one in that house, that she had fled from it to avoid insult. Perhaps spies had got wind of the meeting, had lain in wait for her. Now God help my dear master!

I kept thrusting head and shoulders through one of the windows. I had fancied for a time that I could catch sounds of pursuit. However, such noises had died away. Now and again a window in one of the houses would be flung up by some stay-awake whose curiosity was aroused by this carriage tearing along at a break-neck pace.

Where were we going? I didn't care much; the coachman clearly was driving under directions. My greatest anxiety was that the vehicle would be overtaken.

My companion had regained her breath, if not her courage. She sat bolt upright, her gloved fists clenched tightly, seeming to listen for any noise of pursuit.

All at once the coachman pulled back his horse with a violence that nearly flung it down.

"Open!" panted the woman in a strangled tone.

I flung back the door and leaped out. At the same instant I received a terrible shock.

We were immediately opposite the Café of the Plague!

Before I could recover my wits the

woman in black rushed past me straight towards the glass doors through which streamed the light from the interior. Now if Nicolas was still here... the thought almost stopped my heart. I flew to intercept her, but was too late. She pushed open one of the swing doors and darted in. I was almost knocked down by the recoil of the door and lost a valuable second. I rushed through.

And the first thing I saw was Nicolas, seated at the table where I had left him, his long legs stretched underneath it, and his eyes, filled with astonishment, fixed upon the figure of the woman as she flashed past him, brushed aside a purple velvet portière, and darted up a single flight of stairs which it concealed.

Now this flight of stairs led to that room above where men met almost every night to win and lose fortunes on the turn of the cards.

I caught a glimpse of Nicolas leaping to his feet as I flew past him after the woman, who seemed possessed by an utter madness. I had no clear idea what I meant to do; I only know that that was one of the least comfortable moments in my life. I was too late to stop her from flashing into that den of gamblers. A score of men were sitting at the tables. They wheeled about, looked at us in amazement. And then...

Then the extraordinary happened.

The woman flung back her cloak, pushed up her veil, rid herself in an instant of her seeming panic, and cried in a loud, in a perfectly tranquil voice:

"My brother is here, gentlemen? Ah, Wolfgang, I am so pleased to find you. What do you think? My dear friend Count Saros has brought me here to join in the play!"

Yes, it was the Marquise Olga who spoke, flushed, radiant, damnably handsome in that beautiful saffron silk gown with the red Malmaisons at her bosom. And the man whom she addressed, who rose from a seat at one of the tables, was that very officer who had sung, downstairs in the *salle à manger*, that wicked song of Maupassant's.

What a change! What a transformation! What an actress! And although at that moment I could have struck the in-

solent face of her. I am yet compelled to admit that she did the thing in a peerless fashion—head tossed back, hands on hips, eyes sparkling with meaningful laughter. *Pardi*, after all, many men would have been proud to own the Marquise Olga.

If you fail to perceive her game, you are more dense than I was at that instant. It was clear enough, and bad enough, and sure enough. She had played just to get me into a compromising situation with her. Since fair means had failed to win me, there remained only the foul. Here we were out together at this dead hour of the night; and by bringing me here to this company, and before her devil-may-care brother, she had made that fact sufficiently public. It spoke eloquently, you will allow. As for the real truth, my lips were sealed. And as a matter of fact she had not directly lied to me, but had hinted just enough to make me fool enough to suspect that her companion in the carriage was—the Queen. But that companion was merely an accomplice in the game of the Marquise to entrap me. The uproar in the upper room had been a make-believe; the Marquise had wrapped herself in the other's cloak and shawl, and drenched herself with that perfume of verberna which I shall always remember! She had brought me here, where she knew her brother played at nights. The latter, however, judging from the expression of stupefaction on his face, was not a party to her pretty conspiracy.

So, I ask no pardon for this explanation, which is very necessary. Let it fill up that interval of a minute's utter silence following upon our rush into the gaming den.

Thank God my terrible suspicion was shattered. That was my first thought, and an intense relief. It permitted me to look Nicolas straight in the eyes.

He did not return the gaze. He was standing a little outside the wide-open door, and watching, with an expression which is frozen upon my memory, the face of Wolfgang Muller.

And in that instant I knew for certain that the world's evil whispers had reached his ears. For the first time Nicolas saw the man whose name was linked

with his Queen, with her heart, with her love, with the treasure that was greater than his kingdom. Did he believe those reports? I cannot say, I shall never be able to say; but his face was deadly white, and sparks seemed to glimmer in his eyes like lightning in a thunder cloud.

A voice shouted huskily:

"By the great devil, you have a queer fashion in introductions!"

That was Wolfgang Muller talking to his sister.

I kept my eyes fixed upon Nicolas. Some of the company might have seen him, but I doubt if they pierced his slight disguise, for he was well back in the shadow. Suddenly he looked at me. I tried to catch a gleam of counsel, but in vain. Only a straight, hard look, with that flicker of lightning in the eyes. He recoiled. I heard him fight back a groan.

And suddenly there descended upon me a great calm, a sure way of action in this crisis.

The Marquise retorted with perfect tranquillity: "Is this your welcome, brother? I suppose you have been losing a great deal of money." She turned to me. "Count, permit me to introduce you to my brother Wolfgang, who is in a bad temper, it appears."

She was cool and no mistake.

I bowed to the gentleman indicated. He looked me up and down. Bad luck of the cards had cleared his brain of wine fumes, but had brought a worse excitement. He had a full red nether lip which he stuck out ferociously, and a long black mustache extending straight upwards past his eyes, giving him a very singular appearance. He snarled, striking the table:

"You walk with your lady friends at a late hour, monsieur."

I regarded him steadily.

"And you bring them to strange places?"

I had no reply.

"You will give me, if you please, an explanation?"

"*Pardi*, you have some right, I will admit."

"Then—?"

"Pardon, I am not in an explaining mood."

"I will help you. My sister, in coming here at this hour, has acted as a fool; and you, who have brought her, as a rascal."

"That is candor, monsieur, which is one of the virtues."

The Marquise interposed haughtily. "We are not here to hear a sermon from you, Wolfgang. I insist that you apologize to Count Saros, who is my friend and—an honorable gentleman."

I noted the least possible emphasis on the last words. So did Muller, for he rapped out:

"I am perfectly willing to believe it and to recall any unpleasantness. You are well aware what people will say after this escapade, Olga. It is for Count Saros to keep slanderous mouths closed by upholding your honor in the one way possible. He is prepared to do that?"

The question was addressed to me. I had expected it. It was the corner into which the Marquise Olga had played to edge me.

There was an interval of silence not without a touch of drama.

Every eye probed mine. Many men present I recognized, and was surprised to see some for whom the lure of the cards, the lust of the gaming fever was to me a revelation. A few had come here from a fashionable ball, a sprinkling of officers in regimentals, and as they stirred, the steel points of their saber scabbards scraped along the floor, which was covered with hundreds of cards.

I glanced at the Marquise. She smiled enchantingly. I had but to take her hand and this ugly knot would be cut. More, it was a fair hand, soft and warm; also the matter of her reputation certainly did appear to be somewhat in my keeping—even though she had thrust it upon me. But I did not debate such points at the moment, because I was telling myself that Wolfgang Muller had come secretly to Assila. What had brought him? I found but one answer to the question. No more must a royal name be coupled with his; no more must Nicolas look upon him with eyes of death.

I folded my arms and faced him.

"In these delicate matters, monsieur, I decline to accept any man's compulsion."



I folded my arms and faced him. "In these delicate matters, monsieur, I decline to accept any man's compulsion."

He stormed: "That is your final answer?"

"Which I will supplement in any way you desire."

"By heaven you shall!" he snarled, and whipped out a sabre which lay in a sheath across a chair. Every man leaped to his feet. The Marquise uttered a shrill scream. The fellow flung himself in an attitude of fence, his point three inches from my throat. Wine and losses and passion had made a madman of him. There was hell-fire in his eyeballs, and his red lips writhed. He stammered, scarcely able to get the words out:

"You shall marry my sister—now—here, or as sure as there are devils in the pit, I'll give you my thrust between your eyes!"

"A charming alternative, monsieur."

"You mock me?" he howled.

"Precisely."

I cannot tell if he would have murdered me in his frenzy, but at that instant some one there slipped a weapon into my hand. He lunged before I was ready, and only a swift movement of the head saved me. The Marquise shrieked and rushed towards us, but she was pulled back because my opponent, blind to everything, was using his heavy weapon in a fashion which cleared a space about us. The Marquise must have been urged from the room, possibly by force, for her cries became fainter and fainter. And no one interfered between us, doubtless feeling that we had got to meet on these terms, and that we might as well finish as postpone.

Pardi, there was little science in that affair, I do assure you. There was too much furniture, and too many onlookers, and the devil of a noise, and my oppo-

nent was lunging again and again at my forehead, using those terrible facial thrusts which are so disconcerting to one not sure of his elbow room. One must retire before them. Yet I had had no opportunity to gauge the width of the room. How near was my back to the wall behind me? I could not see it, but he could. I dared a step back—another, slipping my point under his and changing the line in simple disengagement; and then suddenly my left foot slipped on two or three of the cards scattered on the bare floor, and he drove, straight and hard, for that narrow spot where one's eyebrows almost meet.

An instantaneous relaxing of my knees foiled that deadly thrust. The point flashed over my head and thudded into the paneling of the wall. He tugged it free in a second of time, but that was just two-fifths of a second too late.

He turned slowly, looking up at the ceiling, at the rafters, from which depended long webs swinging in the disturbed air. And the blaze in his eyes went out like a flame which the wind extinguishes. I had run him through both lungs. He hiccupped in a terribly natural manner.

From first to last the hubbub had endured but three minutes. I went out from it. No one stopped my egress. I looked for Nicolas, but he had slipped away. Well, I had made that thrust for his sake, and for the sake of a queen's name.

In the deserted street the long shadows crept after the moonlight. Wolfgang Muller died that night in the Café of the Plague. Farewell to love for him. The long adieu to soft arms and caresses!

The next adventure of the gallant Count Saros, under the title of "A Game of Chess," will be in the June Red Book, on all news-stands May 23rd.

There is no Romance in America—

By Cyrus
Townsend
Brady

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN NEWTON HOWITT

FEW writers gain a following so loyal as that of Cyrus Townsend Brady. One big factor is his knack of beginning by plunging into the midst of a situation alive with thrills. So it was with his "Island of Regeneration," his "My Lady's Slipper," and "Island of the Stars;" and so it is with this story: you meet in the first paragraph a beautiful, wealthy young woman, kidnapped from a dinner where she has denounced the lack of romance and variety of life in America.

THE room into which Miss Martendale was so suddenly ushered was flooded with light. It was the conventional drawing room of a New York apartment house of the highest grade. A private electric elevator had brought her from a private entrance to the door. She had seen and heard no one in the passage from the big car to the room. The place was furnished in a most elaborate way and in the prevailing taste of the period. Rich rugs, costly laces, formal pictures, beautiful electroliers, every one of them alight, gilded chairs, a grand piano, met her eyes. The room was spacious but singularly empty. She decided at once that no one lived there. She might scream, but no one would hear.

As she stood helplessly waiting the pleasure of her captor—since she could do nothing else—she heard the automobile which had brought her to the private entrance drive away. There was a singular loneliness about the place. It was quite late. There was no traffic, ap-

parently, in that part of the town. No sound came to her from the street below but the harsh note of the horn of that disappearing car. The vicinity seemed as deserted as her father's country place. Her captor had carefully closed the door behind her and she had heard the key turn in the lock. She was a prisoner, with no means of escape, no one to whom to appeal for help.

She recalled the conversation earlier in the evening at the dinner party at the big house on the Hudson, given to announce her engagement to the Duke, which she had capriciously declined to make public at the last moment, or even definitely to enter upon. She remembered, half amusedly, even in her perturbation, her rather fretful deploring of the lack of romance in modern American society, her resentment at the hum-drum monotony of the social life of the busy rich, always seeking some new thing—and never finding it. She could see again the horrified looks; she could hear the amazed exclamations of her father and

mother, of the vacuous Duke and the silly guests—including them all in her mind in one sweeping, disdainful condemnation.

Of what followed she was less clear. It was all more or less a confused horror to her. Her impulsive desertion of the drawing-room after dinner; her walk alone in the park surrounding the great house; the sudden appearance of the man, and his men; the pistol presented to her head; the deadly fear that overcame her as she was half led, half carried to the dark motor car standing without lights in the deserted roadway beyond the gates; the long ride through the night with her captor sitting grim, silent, weapon in hand; the arrival—all seemed like a confused dream in her bewildered mind.

What did it mean? What could it all mean? As the minutes had fled away, her terror had gradually abated. Nothing happened to her, save the fact of her seizure itself, that increased her alarm. In truth, the chorus of events had a contrary tendency. She had been addressed with exquisite deference on the rare occasions when her captor had spoken to her. She could have sworn that he was a gentleman. The room in which she found herself was not one to alarm her. She supposed perhaps she had been seized for a ransom, and as her father was a very rich man, she would be worth a great deal of money to the man or men who had taken her, and they would probably treat her with care and see that no bodily harm came to her.

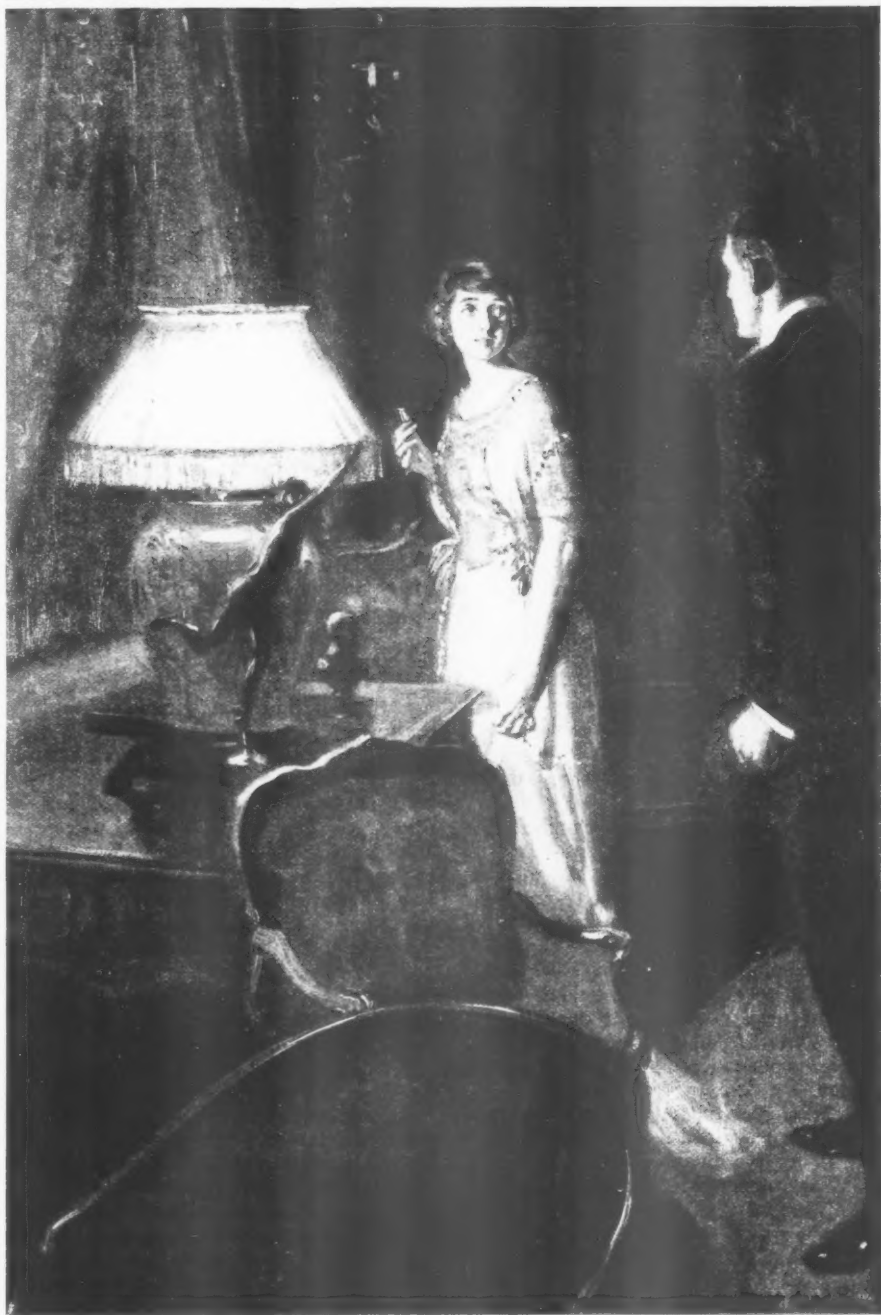
Miss Martendale was a vigorous, healthy, sensible young American girl, for all her beauty, her social prestige and her command of money. As her fears abated, she actually began to look forward to the further developments of the adventure with growing curiosity, interest and even eagerness. All these thoughts ran rapidly through her brain as she watched the movements of the man with whom she was now alone in the room.

He stepped past her, threw the cap, which he had taken off as he entered, on the nearest table, unfastened the long automobile coat he had worn, laid it

aside, drew off his goggles and faced her. She surveyed him thus revealed with deep interest. He was absolutely unimpeachably attired in correct evening dress. She saw a tall, broad-shouldered, stalwart man, with a face which although it might not be called regularly handsome, still was full of strength, intelligence and, best of all, good humor. His eyes, which were bright blue, were sparkling with some powerful emotion; his cheeks, slightly brown as if at some time they had been weather-beaten, were flushed; and strive as he would, there was a certain fascinating tremulousness in his voice when he spoke, in spite of lips and chin that bespoke iron-hard firmness and decision. She wondered if she herself were the cause of his carefully repressed agitation or whether it were due to this adventure into which he had plunged in spite of the frightful risk he was incurring.

She could picture to herself even now the wild excitement at her father's house when she did not return and could not be found. Every telephone in the place would be ringing. Police, detectives, every available man would be started into swift motion to find her and to punish this man who stood regarding her. She did not know where she was. She could not recognize the building from the interior, and it appeared to have been carefully chosen, for the private entrance was far from a street light and she had been so hurried across the sidewalk that she had no time to recognize the quiet side street; but she was confident that they would find her. Meanwhile, confronted simply by a mere man, and such a good looking one, she felt quite able to take care of herself *ad interim*. All her fears vanished now. This was some sort of play, a drama in which she was not spectator, but participant. It was much more exciting.

The agitation of the man was due to the proximity of the woman. To tell the truth, the risk he ran in the adventure did not bulk largely before his imagination. He knew, of course, that he had done a very grave thing and that the law would deal with him with appropriate severity if he became involved in its toils. John Martendale was a man of



"I beg of you, Miss Martendale," said the man quickly, "that you will not blow the whistle until you have heard me further."

sufficient influence, power and wealth to make his punishment swift, and commensurate with his crime. He had known all that before. He had counted the cost and discounted it. To tell the truth, if his undertaking turned out unfavorably he would not greatly care what happened.

Miss Martendale was a sight to make any man tremble. She was rarely beautiful, even without the gilding that came from her father's millions. The tired, worn expression had left her. The dramatic interest of the whole transaction had brought the color to her cheeks—real color, he it noted. Her face rose above her ivory neck and shoulders like a delicately tinted blossom; her dark eyes shone with excitement, and only the twinkling of the diamonds on her breast bespoke some degree of agitation on her part. Her costume—but what could the man who looked at her know about that? It was cunningly devised to set off her beauty, as the humble calix enhances the beauty of the flower. No one ever thought much about her dress—no man, that is; of course, women were more observant—when he looked at Olivia Martendale. She possessed her clothes rather than was possessed of them. Woman-like, it was she who first broke the silence.

"Well, sir?" she began haughtily.

For answer, the young man lifted up the automobile coat, took from it an automatic pistol and stepped toward the woman. A little shiver ran over her, but she did not give back an inch. He smiled at her, noting her courage, reversed the weapon so that his hand held it by the barrel, and extended it to her.

"You will perhaps feel safer with this in your possession than in mine," said the man.

Miss Martendale took the powerful weapon, examined it a moment critically with the eye of an expert.

"You understand the use of it, I see."

"Perfectly," said the woman, recognizing it as the one he had used in her capture. She deposited it lightly on the table near at hand. "I don't think I care to bother with it," she continued indifferently, with splendid bravado.

"Well done," said the man approv-

ingly. "However, in order to make assurance double sure," he continued—and she recognized the unusual correctness of the quotation with a certain satisfaction.—"allow me to give you this whistle." And he extended his hand with a little silver article gleaming in the palm.

"And for what purpose, pray?" she asked, taking it in wonder.

"For this." He turned to the window. "If you will look out of the window you will see, there, over by the electric light, a policeman."

Following his gesture and with a step toward the window, Miss Martendale looked, saw and nodded in confirmation.

"I will raise the window," he continued, suiting the action to the word. "You have only to blow that whistle and cry aloud to summon help."

The whistle was a silver dog-call. Miss Martendale looked at the man, lifted the whistle slowly to her lips, stepped nearer to the window.

"I beg of you, Miss Martendale," said the man quickly but without making the slightest effort to stop her, "that you will not blow the whistle until you have heard me further."

"I have no desire to hear you any further," was the prompt reply.

"I put it to you as a matter of fair play. You were completely in my power. I have freely yielded all my advantage to you. I brought you here that we might have a few minutes of uninterrupted conversation. I now most respectfully ask you at least to give me a hearing."

"Your request, sir," said Miss Martendale, pausing uncertainly, "is most singular. Your astonishing conduct toward me has been outrageous, criminal in the highest degree. The consequences of it—"

"Does it not occur to you," interrupted the young man with deft quickness, "that I must have something very important to say to you to have risked those consequences which, as you were about to point out, and which I quite realize, will undoubtedly be serious?"

"That is so," returned the young woman magnanimously—had she really intended to blow the whistle? "And as I am not without a fair share of curiosity,

I believe that I will for a little refrain from pressing my advantage—which, as you say, I owe to your generosity. I will hear you."

"I thank you," said the young man, bowing gravely and not ungracefully before her, his face lighting pleasantly at her decision.

"Well, sir, time presses and I am not overly patient," she began again as he stood thinking hard.

"Before I say anything further to you I think I would better take a further step to assure your safety," he answered.

"It is not necessary."

"Nevertheless, you will allow me to be the judge of that." After another courteous bow, he turned to a telephone, which stood on a little table in a corner. "Will you give me the number of the telephone in your father's house?" he asked her as he lifted the instrument.

Wonderingly she gave him the number. He stood before the table with the telephone in his hand and presently the connection was made. After some difficulty in making himself understood, he got Mr. Martendale on the line by assuring the secretary who answered that he had news to communicate concerning Miss Martendale's disappearance. And this is what Miss Martendale heard.

"Mr. John Martendale? Yes. Never mind who. This is to assure you that your daughter is entirely safe. Where? In the Bermuda apartments, sixth floor, number 67. No, nothing has happened to her. She is quite well. If you will send your car to that apartment house, the number of which you can get from the telephone book, she will be restored to you unharmed—Stop. If the police are informed, or if anybody comes but you yourself, in person, I will not be answerable for the consequences. Yes, Miss Martendale is here You would like to speak with her? Certainly."

The young man put his hand over the transmitter and turned to her: "Miss Martendale," he said, "your father would like to speak to you. Will you beg him to come for you and convince him of your safety? But be pleased to assure him that it depends upon his not informing the authorities of your whereabouts

and upon his coming himself for you? I depend upon your honor to say nothing more."

Mr. Martendale was intensely gratified to receive the message which his daughter faithfully delivered exactly as she had been requested, and he would fain have learned more from her, but a word from her captor made her hang up the receiver and break the connection. Then she faced the man.

"These details having been attended to," he began promptly, "we can now talk for a few minutes without fear of disturbance." He took out his watch and laid it on the table in plain view. "It took us thirty-two minutes to come, driving at the highest speed of the car—and fortunately escaping arrest. I will give your father forty-five minutes."

"For forty-five minutes, then, I am at your service," said the young lady promptly.

"Miss Martendale," said the young man, "you have doubtless already surmised that I am in love with you."

Miss Martendale started violently. To be frank, she had entertained such a surmise, especially since she had seen the appearance of her captor, if that were what she ought to call him since he now acted more like a host whose solicitude for an honored guest was most marked.

"Are you mad?" exclaimed the girl, judiciously making no admissions.

"I do not know whether I am or not," returned the young man gravely. "But before we continue the discussion, may I not beg you to be seated?"

In obedience to a gesture more like a command, the young woman sat down. Drawing a chair opposite to her but at an entirely respectful distance, the young man followed her example.

"You ask me if I am mad," he resumed. "Indeed, I think I am. Mad with love for you. As I look at you sitting there, Miss Martendale, alone with me, my heart throbs so that I can scarcely command my voice. I can hardly speak at all."

Miss Martendale accepted this astonishing statement literally, although as a matter of fact, the young man was speaking with great fluency and energy and with no apparent hesitation at all.

"This is not a sudden emotion which possesses me," he continued, "although I will admit without hesitation, and indeed affirm it, that any man at the mere sight of you, any man looking into your beautiful eyes, your lovely face, any man seeing your soul in your eyes, in your lips, any man seeing the character, the intelligence, the dignity, the nobility which that rare and surpassing beauty only serves to enhance. . . . Ah, Miss Martendale, any man seeing you, your form, your exquisite hands, those little feet—am I the first man who was ever mad about you?" He broke off abruptly, apparently scarce able to continue.

"Men have loved me, I must admit," said the girl, almost carried away by this wooing, so ardent yet so submissive, so bold yet so humble, so frank yet so restrained, "and have protested it extravagantly, but never quite in this fashion."

"You have admitted all! I knew that no one could love you as I, and now you know it too. As I sit here and look at you, Miss Martendale, I am chaining myself to my seat. If I followed my impulse, if I let myself go for a moment, I would leap to my feet, I would take you in my arms, I would kiss you until you were blind. But have no fear: I respect you as much as I love you and—"

"Did you show your respect for me by kidnapping me in this extraordinary manner?" she asked shrewdly, not in the least afraid that he would do any of those things he threatened.

"Miss Martendale, desperate cases require desperate remedies. I had to have speech with you. I had to tell you that I love you. I had to try to make you feel how much I love you—what my love meant to me and what it might mean to you; and there was no other way."

"And you risked the state prison simply to tell me this?"

"No, not exactly to tell you this."

"Ah," said the girl caustically, and yet with a sudden sinking of her heart at the possibility that the glorious image of youth and manhood and love before her might stand on feet of clay, "you refer to—er—ransom?"

"Pardon me, to treasure," he answered composedly, though he divined her thought.

"What treasure?"

"The treasure of your heart. After I have told you how much I love you—you believe that I love you, do you not, Miss Martendale?"

"It would be difficult not to do so," said Miss Martendale, greatly relieved, flashing a look at him that set his heart throbbing faster, if that were possible.

"Then honor demands that I ask you to be my wife."

"Impossible."

"Isn't it? Unbelievable, unthinkable! You need not reply. I knew what you would say. Yet that is why I took the risk."

"What do you mean?"

"I don't care where I go, what becomes of me now, for without you. Life is nothing. I would as lief spend it in the state prison as anywhere else. Nothing that man could do to me would make life any more hell than the consciousness that you were not mine. So you see the risk was nothing. I had to tell you, to ask you, to be refused. It had to be settled. I had to take the risk."

"But why did you not seek my acquaintance, come to me openly, proffer your suit and—"

"Come to you? Do you realize that you are as inaccessible to a man like me as the North Pole? No! More than that, because if you were at the North Pole I could go there and get you," he added quite simply, as if the thing would be easy.

"What sort of a man are you?" asked Miss Martendale, who began to believe that he might have done what he said so quietly.

"What sort of a man am I? I am a man whose whole story may be summed up in the statement that he loves you."

"Yes, I know, but who are you? What is your name and—"

"My name? I don't know what it is. I don't know where I came from. I don't know what blood runs in my veins. Somebody picked me up in the West when the West was young. I think my father and mother had been killed in some emigrant massacre. Being deficient in imagination, those who cared for me called me Williams. What difference what my name is? It is the fact that I

love you that counts in this game."

"Yes, of course; but what is your profession? Are you a—gambler?"

Miss Martendale had read Bret Harte and other Western authors, it would seem, when she put that question, the answer to which she awaited with growing anxiety; for she thought that there were some things which even she, unconventional as she was, could not possibly overlook, much as she might wish to.

"A gambler? In one sense, yes. Not in the way you mean. I have thrown dice with Fortune for you and, of course, the dice are loaded against me and I lose—"

"I mean what do you do for a living?" she asked directly.

"I live to love you and I will die doing it."

"Will you answer my question?" she insisted impatiently.

"I am a civil engineer, if that is what you mean. I drifted along through my young life, living from hand to mouth, as it were, going to school when and where I could. I was ambitious—you can see how ambitious I am, Miss Martendale, since I have dared to lift my eyes to you. When I grew older, I sent myself through college, a Western university. I studied engineering. Down in southern Colorado I did some railroad work. I prospected a little on the side. I struck a vein, sold it out for two hundred thousand dollars, came East, thinking that I had enough. You see I had never been in New York and—"

"Thinking you had enough for what?"

"Enough to enable me to know you."

"To know me? Do you mean to tell me that you—"

"Ever since I have been a man, ever since I saw you, two years, seven months and three days ago, I have been in love with you."

"But you cannot expect me to believe—"

"Miss Martendale, I take it I have but a short time before you deliver me to your father and he to the officers. I shall never see you again, except when you give your testimony in court—your testimony that sends me out of your life. I am without hope. I have nothing to gain by deceit. Would I lie to you now?"

"But I don't understand," said the

girl, her breath coming quicker, her pulses beating harder.

"One day a few years after I left college," he continued, bending forward toward her, "you came through southern Colorado in your father's private car. There was a wash-out on the road just beyond the station at which the car had stopped. You and your party came out on the platform and watched a lot of cowboys disporting themselves in the station plaza."

"Yes, I remember. Were you among them?"

"No, but I was among the spectators. You looked at those people; I looked at you."

"I recall you now," cried the girl in sudden illumination. "Just before the train started I had an uneasy feeling that some one was staring at me. I looked around. A man took off his hat and bowed."

"I was that man."

"I thought that I had seen you before when I saw you here," said the girl. "But you were dressed so differently and—"

"Of course, and you did not expect to see me here. Well, I loved you from that very minute. I said to myself that if that woman wouldn't be my wife, I would have no other. You remember that one of the illustrated papers published several photographs of your party on that trip. I got them all. I cut you out from every picture. I treasured them. I subscribed to the New York papers. I read them night after night just to find your name."

"Why didn't you patronize a clipping bureau?" asked the young woman, smiling.

"Oh, to see you smile!" exclaimed the man. "I never heard of a clipping bureau," he answered after a pause. "Besides, it was too sacred a passion to go to anyone with. I hugged it to my heart. I dreamed about you on the high mountains, in the lonely camps, on the wide plains. I saw your face everywhere. Why, I could perhaps have held my mine and have sold it for a million dollars. I took the first offer, rushed here and found I was no nearer to you than I was before. I didn't know anybody you

"This is not a sudden emotion which possesses me," he continued, "although I will admit without hesitation, and indeed affirm it, that any man at the mere sight of you, any man looking into your beautiful eyes, your lovely face, any man seeing your soul in your eyes, in your lips, any man seeing the character, the intelligence, the dignity, the nobility which that rare and surpassing beauty only serves to enhance. . . . Ah, Miss Martendale, any man seeing you, your form, your exquisite hands, those little feet—am I the first man who was ever mad about you?" He broke off abruptly, apparently scarce able to continue.

"Men have loved me, I must admit," said the girl, almost carried away by this wooing, so ardent yet so submissive, so bold yet so humble, so frank yet so restrained, "and have protested it extravagantly, but never quite in this fashion."

"You have admitted all! I knew that no one could love you as I, and now you know it too. As I sit here and look at you, Miss Martendale, I am chaining myself to my seat. If I followed my impulse, if I let myself go for a moment, I would leap to my feet, I would take you in my arms, I would kiss you until you were blind. But have no fear: I respect you as much as I love you and—"

"Did you show your respect for me by kidnapping me in this extraordinary manner?" she asked shrewdly, not in the least afraid that he would do any of those things he threatened.

"Miss Martendale, desperate cases require desperate remedies. I had to have speech with you. I had to tell you that I love you. I had to try to make you feel how much I love you—what my love meant to me and what it might mean to you; and there was no other way."

"And you risked the state prison simply to tell me this?"

"No, not exactly to tell you this."

"Ah," said the girl caustically, and yet with a sudden sinking of her heart at the possibility that the glorious image of youth and manhood and love before her might stand on feet of clay, "you refer to—er—ransom?"

"Pardon me, to treasure," he answered composedly, though he divined her thought.

"What treasure?"

"The treasure of your heart. After I have told you how much I love you—you believe that I love you, do you not, Miss Martendale?"

"It would be difficult not to do so," said Miss Martendale, greatly relieved, flashing a look at him that set his heart throbbing faster, if that were possible.

"Then honor demands that I ask you to be my wife."

"Impossible."

"Isn't it? Unbelievable, unthinkable! You need not reply. I knew what you would say. Yet that is why I took the risk."

"What do you mean?"

"I don't care where I go, what becomes of me now, for without you, life is nothing. I would as lief spend it in the state prison as anywhere else. Nothing that man could do to me would make life any more hell than the consciousness that you were not mine. So you see the risk was nothing. I had to tell you, to ask you, to be refused. It had to be settled. I had to take the risk."

"But why did you not seek my acquaintance, come to me openly, proffer your suit and—"

"Come to you? Do you realize that you are as inaccessible to a man like me as the North Pole? No! More than that, because if you were at the North Pole I could go there and get you," he added quite simply, as if the thing would be easy.

"What sort of a man are you?" asked Miss Martendale, who began to believe that he might have done what he said so quietly.

"What sort of a man am I? I am a man whose whole story may be summed up in the statement that he loves you."

"Yes, I know, but who are you? What is your name and—"

"My name? I don't know what it is. I don't know where I came from. I don't know what blood runs in my veins. Somebody picked me up in the West when the West was young. I think my father and mother had been killed in some emigrant massacre. Being deficient in imagination, those who cared for me called me Williams. What difference what my name is? It is the fact that I

love you that counts in this game."

"Yes, of course; but what is your profession? Are you a—*a gambler?*"

Miss Martendale had read Bret Harte and other Western authors, it would seem, when she put that question, the answer to which she awaited with growing anxiety; for she thought that there were some things which even she, unconventional as she was, could not possibly overlook, much as she might wish to.

"A gambler? In one sense, yes. Not in the way you mean. I have thrown dice with Fortune for you and, of course, the dice are loaded against me and I lose—"

"I mean what do you do for a living?" she asked directly.

"I live to love you and I will die doing it."

"Will you answer my question?" she insisted impatiently.

"I am a civil engineer, if that is what you mean. I drifted along through my young life, living from hand to mouth, as it were, going to school when and where I could. I was ambitious—you can see how ambitious I am, Miss Martendale, since I have dared to lift my eyes to you. When I grew older, I sent myself through college, a Western university. I studied engineering. Down in southern Colorado I did some railroad work. I prospected a little on the side. I struck a vein, sold it out for two hundred thousand dollars, came East, thinking that I had enough. You see I had never been in New York and—"

"Thinking you had enough for what?"

"Enough to enable me to know you."

"To know me? Do you mean to tell me that you—"

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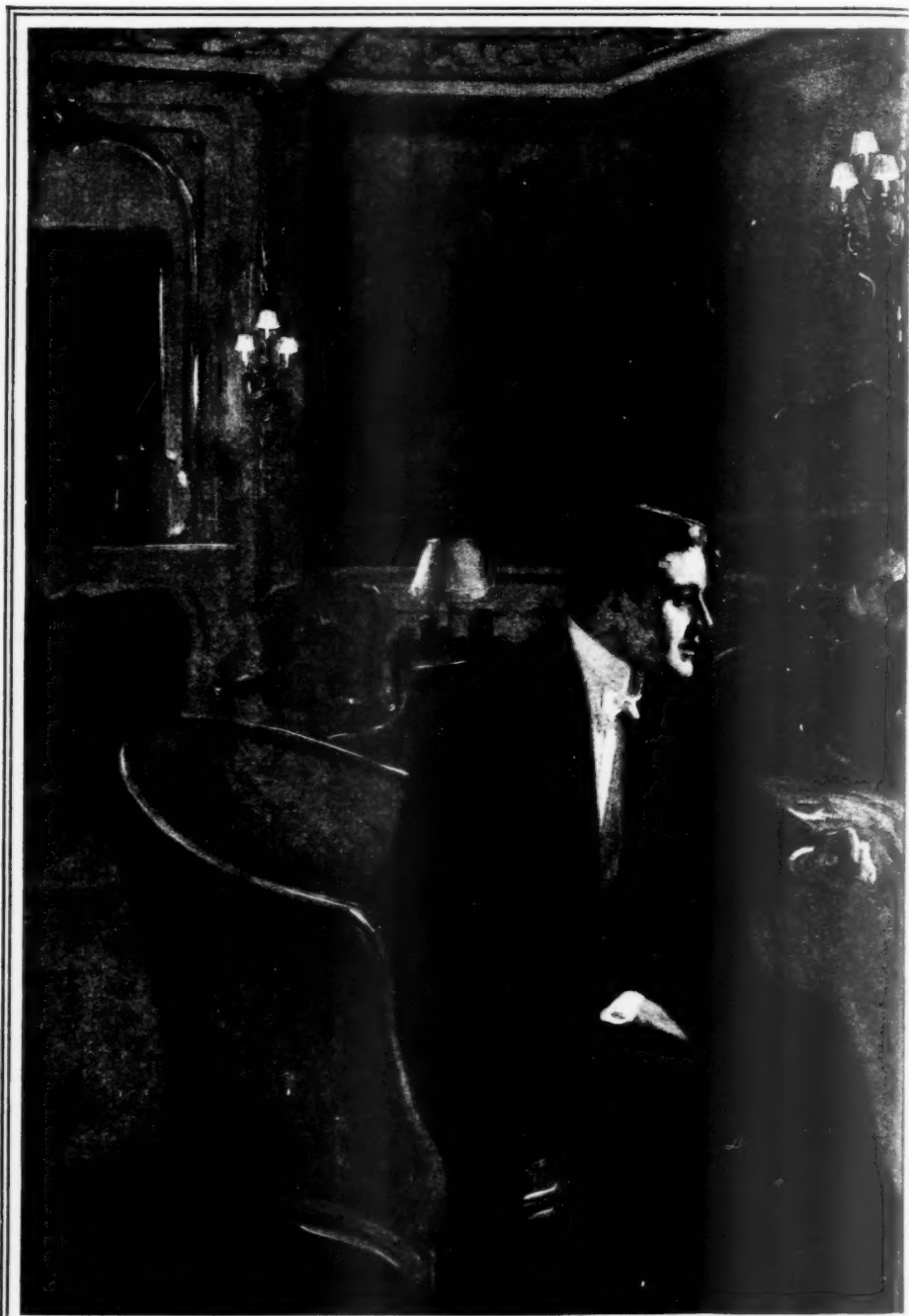
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man. "I am in love with you and I am therefore telling you only the facts. My love is not blind, it is a better picture of you than that one."

knew; I had no friends or acquaintances; I found that there were some things that money could not buy, and one of them was an introduction to you. Something money could buy is this."

The young man reached down into his pocket and drew forth a little case. He touched a spring; it flew open. He handed it to the woman. It was an exquisite miniature of herself, painted on ivory with skill and delicacy by a master whose work she knew.

"Why, this is I," she exclaimed. "How did you get it?"

"I bought a photograph of you."

"It was a breach of trust in the photographer," said the girl, her face flushing.

"Yes, it was, but I paid what men would call a fabulous price for it. The photographer could not resist the bribe."

"How much?"

"What difference?"

"I insist upon knowing."

He shook his head.

"If it had been all I possessed, I would have given it," he said simply.

"And then?"

"And then I took it to the artist and he—"

"I know what *he* charges," said the girl.

"He wouldn't touch it for less than many times the usual figure. I was never so disappointed in my life as when he finished it. But of course I took it and paid him."

"Disappointed? It is lovely, perfect," said the girl.

"Miss Martendale, it is no more like you than the moon is like the sun. There is no artist that lives, or that ever will live, who could portray you adequately on anything."

He spoke in the calmest way, as if the statement were so ordinary and inevitable as scarcely to be worth emphasizing.

"I never heard such extravagant—" began the girl, flushing.

In spite of her effort to speak with a calmness that matched his own, her voice trembled.

"You never heard the truth then," returned the man. "I am in love with you and I am therefore telling you only the

facts. My love is not blind; it is enlightening. Fortunately, I have a better picture of you than that one."

"Impossible!"

"Yes."

"Where is it?"

"In my heart. You may keep the one in your hand if you like."

"I have no right to it. I should not like to take it from you," said Miss Martendale softly, not quite realizing the purport of her admission.

Mr. Williams gripped the arms of his chair hard as if to hold himself down, but otherwise he made no motion.

"Now that I have seen you so near at hand," he said softly, "now that I have been permitted for a short time to breathe the same air with you, I need no picture; I need nothing but the remembrance of this immortal moment."

"But had you never seen me before?"

"Seen you? I have seen you a hundred times."

"Where?"

"Wherever I could. In your box at the opera, at the horse show, in your car. I have even wandered about houses where you were until the servants ordered me away. As for the rest—but why go on? I have spent most of my money. This little adventure of the night has cost me a great sum. It has taken almost all that was left. I had to bribe everybody, and because of the secrecy and the danger I had to pay heavily. It wasn't my car or my chauffeur. This is not my apartment. I never saw it before to-day. I have absolutely nothing to offer you—but myself. You are the heiress of millions; I am penniless. Personally, I would not let that stand in my way a minute. If you loved me, if you could feel for me a thousandth part of what I feel for you, I would take you away from all this conventionality, and all this artificiality, from all this money, from all this idle play. You could leave all this behind. I want only you. I would take you out into the great West, where life is sweet and love is young. I would make you the queen of my heart. Oh, if you loved me, any spot on earth would be heaven and I your ministering angel."

He rose; he looked at his watch.

"And now I have said all that I have

to say. Your father will be here in five minutes. He will take you back to your friends. He will give me over to the police. I will say that I kidnapped you for a ransom. I will make no defence. I have had my hour. I would have paid the price over and over and over again to have had it. You have listened to me. I have seen you. We have spoken together. Perhaps it may be that you will let me touch your hand just once before it is too late. And then you can go back and forget me. This will all be a dream to you. You can marry that duke. I shall be dead. Oh, I suppose I shall live along, but I shall be dead the minute I see the last of you. But I am glad, glad to have lived. My life has been a great success. I have had more joy and happiness in these forty-five minutes than any other man could have had in as many years. And so, Miss Martendale—Olivia—good-by."

He stood before her, very straight of figure, very square of shoulders, very white of face. His lips, firmly closed, were again a little tremulous. The woman rose also. She was strangely agitated. She extended her hand before his compelling glance. He seized it with both his own and held it. He did not carry it to his lips; he merely held it tighter, tighter, tighter, while he looked at her.

"I am not going to marry the Duke," softly said the girl at last.

Her face had grown not less white than his own. His eyes plunged into hers as if to read her soul. She still had strength of will to sustain his glance.

"No?" he choked out.

"No. I am not going to marry anybody unless—" She stopped, wondering, terrified at the words that came rushing to her lips.

It was as if another personality possessed her, as if she could not help but speak strange, almost appalling words. This time the red flag flamed in her cheeks before his passionate stare.

"Unless—" He repeated in a voice lower but more penetrating than her own.

"Unless—"

She stopped. Her head fell. They still stood close together, his hands clasped

over her hand, the three hands trembling violently, the two hearts beating up in the two throats with suffocating intensity.

"Unless what?" said the man hoarsely.

The girl lifted her head.

"You have told me the truth?"

"The whole truth, so help me God—and you," said he, returning her glance fearlessly.

"Unless I marry you," said Miss Martendale, throwing everything to the wind.

The forty-five minutes and the twenty-eight years of the man's life were lost. He began to live when he took that glorious woman in his arms, when he turned her face upward and their lips met. They did not hear the noise in the street. They did not hear the noise on the stair. They did not hear the noise of the elevator. It was only when the door was thrown open and John Martendale, with the Duke and Billy Van Cleve and Connie Arslake and the Bishop, and in the background, her mother, burst upon them that they were recalled to their senses.

"Olivia," said her father, stopping aghast in the open doorway and then coming forward as the others crowded him into the room. "What is the meaning of this? I understood—"

"This," answered Olivia, turning her face toward them but making not the slightest effort to disengage herself from his strong arms, "is Mr.—what is your first name?" she whispered to him.

"Billy."

"Mr. Billy Williams of—where did you say?" she whispered again.

"Colorado."

"Of Colorado," she continued. "to whom I am to be married. When are we to be married?"

"To-night," said the man triumphantly.

"To-night," echoed the woman.

"You see, Father," she added, feeling that some explanation was expected after her mother fainted, her father swore, and the Duke dropped his monocle, while all the others stared, "for the first time in my life I have come in touch with a real man and a real romance, and I cannot let either of them go."

BURGLARS NEXT DOOR

By
Clinton York

ILLUSTRATED
BY F. FOX



"BURGLARS NEXT DOOR" is a story of that precocious infant, Jane the Second, daughter of the Smiths, of Malden Avenue. Mr. York writes his stories and Mr. Fox makes his illustrations with an eye to interesting all who have babies, who expect some day to have babies or who have friends who have babies.



OUR city has one of the finest looking police forces that can be found anywhere. On municipal Day, when they come down the street with a good inch of manly wrist showing between their white cotton gloves and the ends of their coat sleeves, swinging their blue corded mahogany parade sticks, and with their shoes blacked, it's a sight to be proud of. There has been, though, a little criticism now and then of their methods of preserving law and order. In fact, we who live along the edge of the park on Malden Avenue, have to padlock our refrigerators at night and take milk from a man who delivers in the daytime.

After two houses had been looted right on our street, I bought a pistol and wrote an article to the editor of the *Gazette*, demanding protection from the governor of the commonwealth if our local force wasn't competent to cope with the wave of crime that was in our midst.

I don't take the *Gazette* as a usual thing, because it doesn't favor my party, but it has been getting after the city government so hard lately that I decided that it was the paper to publish my righteous protest. I bought the paper regularly for a week in order to see my letter in print and had just about made up my mind to send a copy of the letter together with the facts to another paper suggesting that they feature it with a big headline: "WHY?" It's a good thing to make a paper like the *Gazette* come out into the open and show where it really stands.

The *Gazette* finally printed my letter on Saturday, but the way they stuck it in one corner of the back page shows that I had struck a sore spot. I brought the paper home with me to show my wife Jane, when I came from the office Saturday noon and found her all ready to go down town on a shopping trip with arrangements made for me to stay with Jane the Second, aged fourteen months, and the house.

According to Jane's plans, Jane the

Second and I were to go for a nice, long afternoon walk as soon as we had finished our lunch. She also suggested that I might enjoy exploring that section of the city out beyond the car barns. Exploring sounds well enough, but pushing a baby carriage on Saturday afternoon when you'd planned to clean the cellar isn't exactly my idea of an "afternoon out." However, Jane doesn't like to have her plans disarranged, so I agreed.

Jane the Second and I were just finishing up our dairy lunch—I took bread in mine and sat at the kitchen table and used a bowl—when Jane the First left, so there was nothing for me to do but to put Jane the Second into her knit overall panties, follow them up with her blue padded-silk coat, see that her sleeves were pulled down, squeeze her white corduroy overcoat on over that, get all her fingers inside her mittens at the same time and pin the mittens to the coatsleeves. Next I turned my attention to her head, and after three tries succeeded in tying on her white silk bonnet with real lace on it, in such a way that neither ear was sticking out to catch earache, and stowing away the strings inside her coat so that she couldn't chew them. From this point there is nothing left to do when you take Jane the Second for a ride except to strap her in the carriage with a sort of goat harness safety-strap

which Jane had made out of a leather strap and my best silk necktie. I liked the tie, but it matched Jane the Second's hair.

Mrs. Bordman was passing our house pushing her Erminie just as I got Jane the Second and the carriage down off the porch.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Smith," she called to me. "I tell you, it's a blessing to have a husband who is handy around the house. Now Mr. Bordman is so interested in baseball and all sorts of men's things that he'll *never* wheel Erminie out in her carriage."

I glanced down at our Jane the Second and then took a good long look at Erminie.

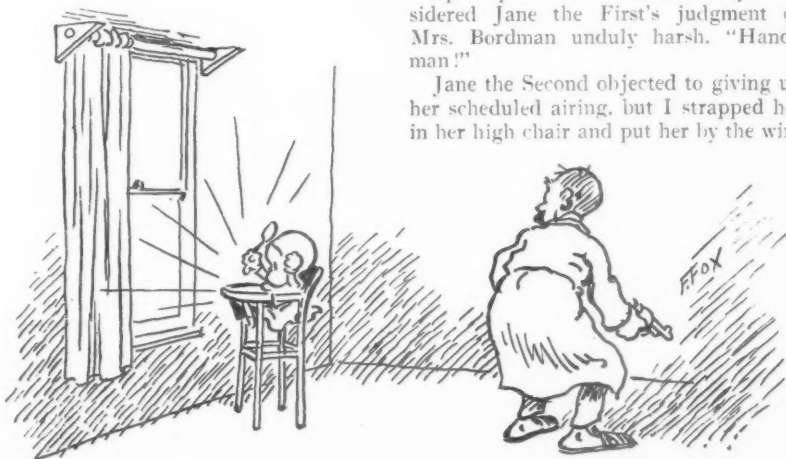
"Baseball is a very nice game. Mrs. Bordman, and I don't blame him a bit for liking it. I might like it myself under certain circumstances," I added—to myself.

"I tried to get him to take a walk with Erminie and me this afternoon," said Mrs. Bordman. "When I saw your wife starting off, I told him that you would probably be out tending little Jane."

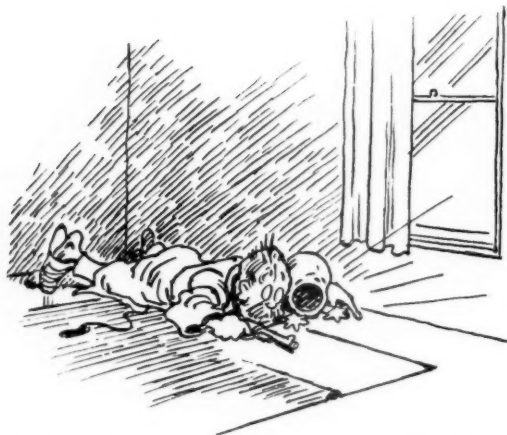
"But I am *not* going to be out this afternoon! I am just going to mail a letter at the corner, and Mrs. Smith will be back soon anyway," I explained.

I went as far as the mail-box and came back and took off Jane the Second's wraps. Up to this time I had always considered Jane the First's judgment of Mrs. Bordman unduly harsh. "Handy man!"

Jane the Second objected to giving up her scheduled airing, but I strapped her in her high chair and put her by the win-



Jane the Second called my attention to another negro, disguised to look like the first one.



She kicked and protested, but I knew the danger from flying bullets.

dow. There are times when a parent's feelings must be considered—at least in my house. Jane the Second showed her displeasure by sticking both ears of her woolly "Bunny" rabbit down her throat at the same time in an effort to choke herself.

I took off my shoes and put on my slippers and brought a big easy chair out into the dining-room. I read my letter in the *Gazette* once more and was about to turn to the editorial page when Jane the Second attracted my attention by pulling down a lace curtain and beating on the window pane with her fists. The trouble was over in the Moore's yard. A great, tall negro carrying a satchel was going around to the Moore's back door. Jane the Second's actions aroused my suspicions in the first place, but when he went back and tried the front door and then left his satchel around by the cellar door while he made a complete circuit of the house, looking up at every window in the second story, I knew that there was something decidedly wrong. It pleased me, too, to see that Jane the Second had inherited my instinctive regard for the common civic welfare. It's not usual these days.

My first impulse was to take the pistol and go over and accost the intruder, but when he disappeared around the other side of the house, it occurred to me that

if he should attack me from the advantage of an ambush there would be no one left to give Jane the Second her coddled egg at 3:30. If there is one thing that Jane the First prides herself on more than another, it's the schedule she has prepared for Jane the Second's bringing-up, with the aid of two baby books and a soap advertisement. Jane the First makes the items of that schedule fall into line on the dot in a way that sometimes convinces me that nature intended Jane for a train dispatcher.

I decided that it would be better to call up the Moores and tell them that they were about to be robbed, but they

didn't answer the telephone.

I never have liked the Moores and I hated to assume responsibility for their house, but I am not the man to shirk a plain call to duty, so I hunted up the box of cartridges and put one in the pistol—Jane the First never allows me to keep it loaded in the house—and peeked out through the curtains to watch developments. I knew if I waited until the fellow came out with a big haul and then had him arrested, he would get a heavier sentence and it would be a warn-



I never forgot a single detail of her wardrobe.

ing to burglars to keep off our street. There was just a chance, too, that Mr. Moore might get home in time to attend to his own burglar.

I was just going out on the back porch to reconnoiter when Jane the Second called my attention to another negro disguised to look almost like the first one going around to the back of the Moore's house to join his pal. I returned to the house. Even a brave man with no responsibilities will think twice when the odds are two to one—particularly when they are desperate enough to break into a house right in broad daylight. The way they slipped up one at a time showed me that they were professionals. I had seen lots of their kind in police court when I first began to practice law.

Though I had no confidence in the police. I realized that this was a case for no ordinary citizen. I called "Police Emergency" and told the operator that the house next to ours was being robbed. Then I went back to guard Jane the Second. It was an exciting moment as I stood there by the window, armed only with a pistol, waiting for the police to arrive, and expecting the two desperadoes to make their escape at any minute. Our telephone began to ring and a gruff voice demanded to know if I was the party on that wire who had called "Police Emergency." I informed the voice that I was and asked what was the matter with the police that they didn't respond when a citizen asked their protection.

"Why the devil didn't you give us your address then, instead of ringing off?" roared the voice.

Finally two policemen arrived on the run. I lay flat on the floor and held Jane the Second down beside me. She kicked and protested, but I knew the danger from flying bullets and she didn't. I realize now what a strain a soldier is

under the first time he is exposed to fire.

I couldn't have stood it much longer, between a crick in my back and Jane the Second's energetically beating on my stomach with her heels, when some one providentially pounded on the back door. It was one of the policemen. I left Jane the Second on the floor and went to see what he wanted.

"Good afternoon, Captain," I said, saluting. I wasn't sure that he was a captain, but I always feel that way in the presence of burly policemen.

"Was you the man what saw the niggers breakin' in next door?"

"Well, no—not exactly. My daughter Jane saw them first."



I carefully protected Jane by keeping her well in the lee of the thick policeman.

"An' could I talk with the young Miss?"

"I am afraid—" I began, but when he looked at me suspiciously I went and brought Jane the Second to the kitchen door.

"Jane, this is the nice brave policeman. Officer, my daughter."

"But the other one?" he inquired.

That made me angry. I'll stand for no policeman prying into my family, and I showed it in my looks.

"I beg to inform you, sir, that Jane the Second is my only child. It was she who first saw the burglars and pointed them out to me."

Then he got impertinent.

"I wish she'd do as much fer us. It's

as still as a coffin over there. Where's the folks?"

"If it were not for risking this innocent child," I threatened, "I'd go over there and point out the very spot where they stood."

I realize now that I shouldn't have gone against my better judgment, but when the fellow stood there grinning like a Cheshire tomcat, I got excited and saw red.

"I guess me an' Tim can perfect you—or one of us might stay wid the young lady."

Even in the excitement I remember with a good deal of satisfaction that I never forgot a single detail of Jane the Second's outdoor wardrobe. That's one nice thing about having a combination billiard table in your dining-room. Of course it's too heavy to move and it crowds the dining table off into one corner, and the next installment is always coming due unexpectedly, but it's great to lay all of Jane the Second's things on in exact order along the cushions and then wheel her around the table in her carriage picking off one article of clothing after another. It's simply applying efficiency methods to the home. The pool pockets are convenient, too, to hold safety pins and powder boxes and teething rings.

The captain was so fascinated by the system that he never showed the least impatience until I bungled four times in trying to keep Jane the Second in both legs of her knit overalls long enough to tie up the drawstring at the waist.

"What in Sam Hill do you think this is—a fall opening of the infants' department on the third floor? Do her up in a carpet and come on."

I wrapped Jane the Second carefully in a woolen blanket and started, but we kept at a respectable distance behind him on the way over. It was his business, not ours.

His assistant was standing well out on the other side of the house where he could watch both the front and back doors. His revolver and fierce look convinced me that this was no such child's play as his superior had led me to believe.

"Is this safe, Officer," I demanded sharply.

"If you don't drop it." And I saw him wink at the policeman with the revolver.

I followed the fellow clear around the house, carefully protecting Jane the Second by keeping her well in the lee of the thick policeman. I felt safer myself. To show him that I had as much courage as a mere hireling, I followed him up onto the back porch and even stepped inside the dark woodshed when he went in there. Jane the Second objected. She began to scream and kick and shout "dadada" at the top of her lungs. Before I could jump back, she gave her "Bunny" rabbit such a fling that I caught my heel on the threshold and sat down on the porch floor with a bang. An awful howl came out of the darkness, but it was smothered in the crash of about three cords of falling kindling wood that had been piled up against the wall. For a second there was a tense stillness; then the woodpile began to boil up from the bottom, and a woolly black head stuck up through the kindling. At the sight of the revolvers and uniforms, the negro's eyes bulged out even with the end of his blunt nose and his teeth chattered like a steam riveting machine. One policeman grabbed him by the throat, and I had presence of mind enough to hold Jane the Second where she could see the other one manipulate the handcuffs. Most babies wouldn't take an interest in such things.

"Wha—wha—what seems to be wrong wiv you gen'lmen?" gasped the prisoner. "Jumpin' on a doin'-nuffin', sleepin' cul-lahed man wiv babies an' rabbits an' guns?"

"Stow the gaff," ordered the captain of police, "an' produce yer pal." He enforced his threat by showing his teeth to the trembling negro.

"Who—wha—Bill? Why, he didn't get back f'om dinnah in time, so they sent me up to do de job alone."

The captain turned to me. "This man saw two of you comin' in t'gether."

The terrific strain I had just been through made me a trifle nervous and out of breath.

"Well—I—I—I didn't exactly see



"Stow the gaff," ordered the captain of police, "an' produce yer pal."

two of them together. I—that is—this young lady, my daughter—I mean Jane the Second pointed out the two burglars to me as they sneaked up to the house one at a time."

The captain showed his teeth to the captive once more.

"Man, if you don't produce yer mate, I'll use me stick on you." The prisoner began to whimper.

"Diden' I tell you folks dat dey sent only me up heah to Misses Mooah's to look aftah de silber waah and de dishes?"

The two policemen nodded significantly to each other and the captain leaned over to me and whispered behind the shelter of his hamlike palm: "Third degree!"

"But Misses Mooah wa'n't to home," the prisoner continued, sniveling. "She leff dis note."

The two minions of the law retired to the end of the porch to read this new bit of evidence. They returned openly scornful.

"Save it for them Noo York cops. It don't go in this berg! We're here!"

I stepped up behind the policemen both to read the note and to keep Jane the Second on the safe side of their flourishing revolvers. They made her nervous. The note read:

Sir:

I shall be back soon. I have had

to postpone my tea until 4:30. Wait or get here by four o'clock.

MRS. MOORE.

The captain gave me a disgusted look over his shoulder and put the letter ostentatiously in his inner pocket.

"Don't it get you," he remarked to his companion, "how the public crowds around and butts in when you're on a case?"

"Diden' I tell you, didn' I tell you?" expostulated the negro. "Diden' I say I come up heah to Misses Mooah's tea?"

That riled me, and I know Jane the Second well enough to know that she felt it too. I turned on him.

"You black scoundrel," I thundered, "the women of this street may have certain minor characteristics with which I am not entirely in accord, but I'll have you know that every one of them is a lady, and they don't invite every Tom, Dick, and Harry to their social functions."

The policemen were nodding approval, and I could see that they took on a respect for me that they had concealed up to this time.

"I am a lawyer," I announced impressively, "and I am going to cross-examine this fellow."

I assumed as dignified a bearing as I could, with Jane the Second squirming all over my head and shoulder and poking her rabbit into my eye. I pointed a long fore-finger at the prisoner and said

in a deep voice, "Where is the other negro who came in here a half hour after you did?"

For a minute I had him stunned. Then his mouth opened to a large diameter.

"Foah de good Lawd's sake, Mister, I sees it now! Dat was me! When I read de lettah, I clumb de back fence and went fruh de pa'k to White Street to buy some tobacca. Heah it is."

The policemen pounced on this new clew and helped themselves generously. They admitted, after chewing thoughtfully for a minute or two, that it was tobacco.

"Now, Officer, bring his bag," I ordered. I intended to show them that a trained intellect is sometimes superior to their brute force and the experience they are always boasting about.

The assistant policeman opened the satchel and held up the articles one at a time at arm's length. The exhibit consisted of a long white apron, which was followed by a white coat and *two very dangerous looking butcher knives*.

"We've got yer gang," the captain announced. "It's a second-story outfit all right, all right!"

The negro tried to explain.

"Cheese it, an' tell it to th' judge," ordered the captain. "Tim, ring fer the wagon. The box is on the next corner. You'll have to come along too, Mister," he added, turning to me. "The judge will want a witness."

"I should like to, Captain," I began, "but I am afraid that it is 'way past time for Jane the Second's coddled egg, and I am sure that Jane the Second's mother wouldn't like to have little Jane brought into the atmosphere of a police court while she is still so young and impressionable." I would have said more, but we heard some one coming rapidly through the house toward the kitchen. The policemen glared at their captive and pointed their revolvers at the kitchen door.

"Would you believe it, Tim! While we was here chinnin' with this one, the other one was cleanin' out the house," whispered the captain in disgust.

I armed myself with one of the butcher knives and Jane the Second swung her "Bunny" rabbit defiantly by the ears.

The negro moved and the assistant gave him a poke with the end of his revolver. I was afraid that Jane the Second would betray us to the man inside. I have heard of people shooting through doors. As the key sounded in the lock, I gripped my knife more firmly and held Jane the Second close to me.

The policemen crouched, ready to spring. The door stuck and creaked. Then it gave way and the policemen pushed their revolvers into the opening. I shut my eyes and winced involuntarily as I waited for the crack of the revolvers. It's awful to see a man killed but —Mrs. Moore! She took one look and collapsed. One policeman poured water on her while the other fanned her with his cap. In a little while she gave one gasp and came up snorting. I could see that she was terribly put out. The negro flung himself on his knees before her and begged her to save him.

"Misses Mooah, Misses Mooah, you know me, don' you? Diden' you leave dat lettah foah me?"

She turned on us, and I thought that her tone was a trifle caustic.

"If you gentlemen will be kind enough to explain your presence in my woodshed abusing this poor man, I shall indeed be grateful." She stopped to wipe the water out of her eyes with her handkerchief.

"Mrs. Moore," I began, "Jane the Second and I regret exceedingly any inconvenience we may have put you to, but we were merely trying to save your house from being robbed. This man has been trying to palm himself off as one of your guests this afternoon—but it didn't take me long to convince these officers that your high character made his remarks insulting," I added politely.

"An' he'll pay fer them words, too, lady," announced the captain gallantly.

"A guest at my tea!" cried Mrs. Moore. "That person is a caterer! Hamilton Brothers sent him up to serve at my reception this afternoon—if our kind neighbors have no objection," she added, looking pointedly at Jane the Second and me. "It is quite customary, you know, in *some* circles of society, to employ skilled service when one entertains."

The policemen reluctantly freed their

prisoner, and I noticed that they looked sheepish too.

"Now get busy," —Mrs. Moore turned to the released caterer — "and get that tongue sliced and the sandwich bread cut. Good afternoon, gentlemen." she added crisply to the rest of us. She didn't even notice Jane the Second.

"No Ma'am! No Ma'am! I aint

wo'king fo' Hamilton Brovers no moah. I's resigned. Dis business is too dangerous fo' a man what aint any strongah dan I is. No, Ma'am! I's quit."

While I felt hurt and in no way responsible, I didn't want any further trouble with our neighbors, so I offered my good offices in the hopes of changing the negro's mind. I stepped up to him and slapped him jovially on the back and slipped a dollar into his hand.

"Cheer up, old man," I advised familiarly. "It was an accident. Forget it and go ahead with the tea."

He slipped the dollar into his pocket.

"It's all right?" I inquired, hopefully.

He made a quick move toward his pocket and took out the dollar and examined it critically. Then he bit it.

"I guess so," he decided, "but I aint goin' to serve dat tea. I's resigned, I tells you, and a dollar aint none too much fo' sittin' around in dem wristlets."

Jane the Second and I went home without so much as a "Thank you" from Mrs. Moore. I was mighty glad to see Jane the First just getting back and I told her the whole ungrateful proceedings—even about the dollar. We keep a cash account.



"What have you done with the silver?" she demanded.

I could see that Jane had it on her mind to say something about that dollar, particularly when she hadn't been invited to Mrs. Moore's tea, but I mentioned that Jane the Second hadn't yet had her coddled egg. Jane frantically motioned me to get Jane the Second into her high chair and made a dash for the kitchen. We were eighteen minutes be-

hind the schedule! I fastened Jane the Second's bib under her chin and went to fetch her silver feeding spoon and her little gold-lined silver bowl.

"Jane the Second's bowl doesn't seem to be here," I called out to Jane in the kitchen. "Where did you put it?"

"I didn't put it anywhere," Jane responded just a bit sharply. "It's on the sideboard where it belongs."

I was still looking when Jane came in with the egg.

"I can't find it, Jane," I admitted.

Jane took one look at the top of the sideboard and began opening drawers. I looked on, feeling a trifle helpless after that dollar and the eighteen minutes off the schedule.

Jane looked at me. "What have you done with the silver?" she demanded rather suspiciously.

I looked at her in astonishment. "Done with it? What do you suppose I'd—"

She pointed to the drawer where we kept our silverware.

It was cleaned out!

I couldn't say a word, and I didn't; but even the most unexpected of catastrophes never affects Jane the First that way.





The Heart of

By OCTAVUS
ROY COHEN

WITH the exception of Jack London, few writers can describe a prize fight so it is intelligible to any save those who understand the argot of the ring. Mr. London's stories are clear even to women readers, because they deal with the human side of "the game"—not the technical, sport-page

MARY Finerty was frankly proud of the fact that her "steady" was a prize fighter and a good one; and, on his part, Mike O'Donnel derived much benefit from her expert counsel in matters pugilistic. After all, satisfaction with a career is predicated wholly by environment.

In the sporting world it was generally believed that O'Donnel, whose *nom de guerre* was The Shadow, was his own manager; the sport writers—and therefore, the general public—did not know that behind the astute deals for his loudly demanded services stood a black-haired, blue-eyed, utterly pretty little girl. She was his press-agent, press-clipping bureau, mentor; she read every line of every sporting page every day. She felt the financial pulse of the promoters, and the price of the phenomenally clever Shadow went up with each victory. She named the amount demanded; he quailed with apprehension at the enormousness of each sum—but he got it, always. She never demanded too much.

The Shadow was not the lightweight champion, but he was the runner-up. Since professional fighting began, the lightweight division has furnished the most interesting battles. The men are harder, faster, cleverer than those of the heavier classes. And never had there been so many top-notch lightweights as there were at present.

From the day that Kid Waller suc-

cumbed to the merciless tattooing of Tommy Farris, the latter thereby attaining the lightweight crown, cleverness stood at a premium. Then Kid Waller had tried to come back, and had been beaten in jig time by his successor. The second battle signalized a new pugilistic era; the clever boxer had come into his own.

Then The Shadow, rising rapidly from the ranks of mediocrity, took a chance at the retrograding Kid and whipped him easily, thereby adding a jewel to his coronet. In the kingdom of skill, however, there persisted one adverse influence in the militant person of squat, bull-necked, heavily-muscled Walter Brennan, whose ring sobriquet of "Knock-out" had been earned by a succession of whirlwind victories via the ten-second route.

Wisdom and business acumen come to all men when they attain championships. Tommy Farris retired behind the footlights and then, when forced into the ring again, took on third raters. The repeated defits of The Shadow and Knock-out Brennan he ignored, and in the meanwhile the two challengers were disposing of each and every other contender with clocklike regularity. The public howled for an elimination battle between them, and Brennan joined in the cry. The Shadow kept his mouth shut as to Brennan's challenge and hurled more invective at Farris for a title bout.

Through the late afternoon crowd

the Shadow

ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANK B. HOFFMAN

side. That same advantage is possessed by Mr. Cohen in "The Heart of the Shadow." He, like Jack London, knows the ring so thoroughly that he can interpret motives as well as deeds. We introduce this new RED BOOK writer with confidence that you will enthuse over his story.



which jammed Fourteenth Street, The Shadow strutted with Mary Finerty. They talked of the weather, of the crowds, of the latest movie releases; and then, as they passed a huge signboard which advertised the coming appearance of Knock-out Brennan and Tiger Thomson, ten rounds, Marquis of Queensberry rules, "with the usual preliminaries," Mary turned the talk fightward.

"There," she said calmly, "is the man ye've got to lick before Farris'll listen to yuh. He's howlin' for a chanst. W'y don't yuh give it to 'im?"

The Shadow temporized.

"Ye'll marry me w'en I lick Farris?"

She tossed her head indignantly.

"Yuh must think I'm a poor sort of a skoit, Mike. I don't expect me man to put the hooks to the whole woid before I ties up wit' him. Lick Brennan an' I'll marry you. Then Farris'll *have* to give you a chanst, and I'll be Mrs. O'Donnel if yuh win or not—but you will—"

"Thanks! Farris'll be easier than Brennan!"

She looked at him peculiarly.

"What did the Nonpareil offer for a bout wit' him?"

"Five hundred."

"Ten rounds?"

"Yes."

"W'y didn't yuh accept?"

He flushed slightly.

"Not enough!"

"A-a-h!" She inhaled sharply. "Have yuh ever got that much before?"

"No-o. You know that. But Brennan's diff'runt—"

"If you licked 'im, w'at d'yuh think y'd be offered for a ten round, no decision, bout wit' Farris, right here in Noo York?"

"Not less'n a t'ousand."

"Brennan's willin' to fight yuh, aint he?"

He saw the trend of her examination and shrugged irritably.

"W'at if he is? I rank higher'n him. He's too blamed anxious—"

"An' you—"

He was uncomfortable, and saw that she suspected the truth. In her eyes was born the light of faint contempt, tinged with unbelief.

"W'at's th' use," he protested gruffly. "This here Brennan has an awful punch; if it landed I'd be a has-been. They say he hits harder'n a welter. Broke One-round Larisey's jaw with a single punch t'ree weeks ago. I'll make Farris fight me wit'out risking everyt'ing on—"

"Can the bull," she interrupted hotly. "I c'n see t'roo you, Mister O'Donnel, better'n t'roo a pice o' glass. Y'r afraid o' Knock-out Brennan!"

They faced each other in silence, accuser and accused, oblivious to the crowds which eddied past.

Deep down in the heart of every man is strongly rooted the fear of some one thing. He may be intrepid, courageous beyond belief, and yet experience a creeping of the flesh and a wild, insane

desire to run at sight of a spider, a snake—or maybe even blood. Another, and there are many such, may face fists or bullets without shrinking, and yet fear the dark. It is something which is nature-instilled, and cannot be overcome. Mike O'Donnel feared a punch.

He feared Brennan's punch; it was a harder punch than that possessed by any little man in the ring; twice that right cross to the jaw had broken the bones of other good men. He was the ripping, tearing, Terry McGovern style of fighter so dear to the hearts of fight-lovers—always boring in, ready to take two or even three punches for the sake of landing one. On the other hand, The Shadow, was recognized as the cleverest man at his weight in the world, not even excepting the title holder. He boxed like a streak, hit a fairly effective blow, and never failed to outpoint his man by a comfortable margin. It was a matter of history oft-repeated that he had never received a black eye; nor, during his ring career, been knocked from his feet.

Mike O'Donnel had been forced into the ring through stress of circumstances over which he had little control. As a youngster he had boxed with his mates, and from the first time he put on the gloves he felt an abiding fear of physical pain. He showed unusual ability to hit swiftly and recover; and at home, in the privacy of his tenement bedroom, he practiced shadow-boxing. Within six months his playmates refused to box with him, for in that time he had learned the art of beating the other fellow to the punch as a defense; and anyone who has ever boxed will tell you that a jab-tattoo to the face is painfully disconcerting.

Then there had been that evening at the Century club when one of the four-rounders had failed to put in an appearance, and the cheers of his friends had forced O'Donnel into the ring. He had been pushed through the ropes with cold perspiration standing out all over his beautifully developed, lithe young body.

"Name?" the blond referee had grinned.

"The Shadow," piped one of O'Donnel's friends, and from that moment, "The Shadow" he had been.

The first fight was never to be for-

gotten. Feeling that he had to last the four rounds, and avoid punishment, he boxed as he had never done before. The eyes of the referee widened; never had he seen such master skill exhibited by a novice. O'Donnel won easily and Larry Brown promptly took him in charge.

Fight after fight followed, spicing a long course of rigorous training, and in every one skill brought victory. Several times, when he had reached the semi-final class, he had finished men with a succession of stinging jabs, counters, crosses and long range blows. He never indulged in in-fighting, but in lieu thereof made of his footwork a joy forever. Cornered, he covered as only he knew how to cover, working arms and shoulders, nerves vibrant, muscles tensed; then would come a shove, a right-and-left shift, a stinging punch—and he was away again, dancing, feinting, smiling, in the center of the ring.

A chain of victories will beget confidence. The Shadow knew that he was the master of the champion, and did not fear him. But despite constant battles with himself, he could not bring himself to the point of accepting Brennan's challenges.

Brennan's style was everything O'Donnel had learned to fear. Never during his ring career had he been hurt. He did not believe that he could stand the gaff—and Brennan never failed to land. The style of the little fellow was the crouch, the gong, a rush from his corner—half-covered, jaw set, eyes blazing, biceps quivering—then closer quarters and an avalanche of blows, bitterness and blood.

The Shadow had seen Brennan fight; he had seen Brennan's victims writhing on the floor in the agony of a solar plexus punch, or stretched coldly by a clean knock-out blow to the side of the jaw, and, being cursed with a vivid imagination he had suffered more than the defeated fighter lying on the canvas. He had vowed never to fight Brennan—and now *she* had discovered his secret.

He faced her sullenly, refusing to meet her eyes.

"I'm not afraid," he defended half-heartedly. "An' yuh know I aint—"

"I know yuh *are*! You'n me are done,

Mister Shadow. W'en yuh fight Brennan yuh kin come t' me again, win or lose—less'n yuh *quit*."

He squirmed.

"I aint never quit yet," he half whined.

"Ye've never been hurt. I wondered w'y it was yuh wouldn't meet this guy. Y'r record is better'n his. I knew there must be some reason. Same reason, I guess, that yuh wouldn't fight Tiger Thomson, n'r Bill Breedon, n'r Frankie Carr—it just strikes me that all them fellers is bruisers, sluggers. Scared o' bein' hit, aint yuh? I'm ashamed o' yuh, Mike, ashamed!"

She turned and strode away into the crowd, and The Shadow stood alone, gazing absently at the signboard before him. Then an urchin standing near recognized him, and nudged his companion excitedly.

"There's The Shadow," he whispered awesomely; "there's the comin' lightweight champeen. He c'd kill Tiger Thomson or Knock-out Brennan—or any o' them guys. Lordy, he c'n box—"

Mary was gone! And the price for his position in her good graces was a fight with Brennan. O'Donnel squirmed—but he was a man in love.

His jaw hardened, and his huge fists clenched. Determinedly he sought the manager of the Nonpareil Club. Three hours later that same manager, excited beyond belief, telephoned to every newspaper in town the news that The Shadow had consented to meet the winner of the fight between Tiger Thomson and Knock-out Brennan.

In her room Mary Finerty read the sporting pages containing the announcement, and laughed softly, while her eyes grew more tender. He was doing it for *her*—that was enough.

When Tiger Thomson fought Knock-out Brennan, The Shadow was at the ringside, and was introduced to the assemblage as the next man to fight the winner—the winner of the second bout to stand first in line for a crack at the lightweight title.

Then The Shadow had settled down to his ringside seat and watched the tearing, ripping, brutal exhibition put

up by the two sluggers; he had seen blood, and injuries—once Thomson spat out three teeth after receiving a hard blow on the mouth, and went on fighting. The Shadow knew that he would never be able to do that. In the sixth round Brennan landed a right and left to the jaw during a mix-up. Thomson sagged, and Brennan's terrible right uppercut—the fight was over. They carried Thomson, bloody and limp, to his dressing room.

Despite his fear, The Shadow two days later, affixed his signature to a contract for a fight with Brennan in a little less than three weeks, and posted a two hundred dollar guaranty for appearance.

Then he buckled down to training; and always before his eyes was the picture of Tiger Thomson writhing there on the floor—

A good-humored crowd packed the Nonpareil Club, and roared enthusiastically at a fast set of preliminaries. In his dressing room, O'Donnel, clad in a bathrobe which covered green fighting trunks and rubber soled shoes, snapped irritably at Bill Ketrick, his handler, and the retinue of awe-stricken seconds and hangers-on.

The Shadow was scared. Within the next half hour the fight would be under way. He shivered as he thought of being penned in a twenty-foot enclosure with the demoniacal Brennan—yet his position was similar to that of the man doomed to die, and who knows that escape is impossible.

There was no way out; fight he must, and, subconsciously, he determined to lie down, to quit, at the first opportunity which offered. Meanwhile, every bit of his skill would be exerted to hold off the inexorable Brennan.

It was the one punch he feared—that right to the jaw which had laid out One Round Larisey, had lifted him bodily, and dropped him to the floor, an inert mass of quivering flesh, his jaw broken. If he could stave off that punch—he'd never been hit *very* hard, and he felt that he couldn't stand the gaff. Maybe he might fool the crowd, step in close, take a right to the jaw on his glove, and then drop. It would be easy—no one

would ever suspect—he was clever enough for *that*!

Chick Harvey, the announcer, stuck his head in the dressing-room door and ordered The Shadow into the ring. O'Donnel grinned as best he could, and stepped with apparent confidence toward the door, closely followed by his half dozen retainers.

His jaw was set and eyes shining as he stepped into the brilliantly-lighted arena, dense-packed with blood-lustful humanity. An urchin in the gallery spied him and screamed shrill welcome, his cry being taken up by men all over the house, until it swelled into a terrific, rafter-shaking roar of acclamation.

He clambered through the ropes and seated himself on the little stool which was shoved out for him, staring straight across the ring to the place where he knew Brennan would sit. His hands were clasped nervously, and under the flowing bathrobe he could feel the unnatural pound of his heart. Unreasoning fear in the face of certain physical pain nauseated him, carrying him back to the awful night of his debut. He had won then, won every time since, but he had never before faced a rock-man such as he with whom he fought to-night.

In the first place, O'Donnel knew himself to be a light hitter, and he felt that his blows could not stove off the bullet-headed Brennan. His wonderful covering in a tight place he knew would avail him nothing against Brennan's whirlwind flailing; he had seen the little fellow fighting close, lying on his man with the requisite free arm slamming now to the wind, now to the jaw, now to the kidneys—terrible, swooping, vicious blows.

There came another roar from the crowd, and a squat, hideous fighter, hairy, uncouthly muscled, hand-banded, leaped confidently through the ropes. If only Brennan were not so confident, if only that smile would leave his face for an instant—but he was standing before The Shadow, smiling amicably, bandaged hands extended. O'Donnel inspected them dully, curiously—they were very hard hands, broken and battered with the force of blows delivered in other fights. Mutual inspec-

tion finished, Brennan trotted to his corner.

Various celebrities at the ringside were introduced, and four new gloves, unsullied, innocent of appearance, were tossed into the ring. Each second selected a pair, and the fighters donned them and worked back the padding over the knuckles. Their bathrobes dropped, they posed for flashlight pictures, and the telegraph keys about the ringside snapped forth to the world the news that all was in readiness for the big fight.

Farris, the champion, was introduced from the ring amidst howls from the crowd, and smilingly agreed to meet the winner. The Shadow grinned with contempt. If it were Farris he were facing now he'd be champion of the world in the next hour; but Brennan—the awful, slamming, merciless Brennan. He was different.

It was all an old story to The Shadow, this maze of formality which precedes a big fight; but his heart sank with dull fear as he felt the chair being slipped from his corner, and knew that the fight was to start.

He violated the forms of pugilism and faced Brennan across the ring while they waited for the gong, mechanically scraping his feet on the powdered resin, as he watched the writhing muscles in Brennan's back. That fighter, unconcerned as to consequences, and eager for the fray, stood with his back toward the center of the ring and danced an impatient jig while he grasped the upper ropes, working his fingers farther into the gloves, and waited for the gong.

"Time."

The referee's voice, simultaneous with the sonorous, compelling, fateful clang of the gong, started the fight.

It was here! Cold sweat broke out anew on The Shadow's body. Within twenty minutes he would be stretched on that canvas floor, bloody, beaten, discredited—

He heard a roar from the crowd and a film passed from in front of his eyes. Terrified, he saw Brennan, grinning evilly, crouched with arms almost parallel, crooked upwards at the elbow, shuffling, sliding, scraping toward him, glaring venom from his pig-like eyes.

Habit came to his aid. Quiveringly, affrightedly, he balanced on the balls of his feet like a dancing master, muscles tensed, nerves taut. His left arm, extended, shook like an aspen with the flexed strain. His right arm moved in spasmodic jerks between solar plexus and jaw.

The eyes of the fighters met. Their gloves touched. The battle was on. From the ringside came the staccato clacking of a telegraph instrument giving details; it could be heard at all parts of the house. The crowd sensed a brilliant battle. There was something in the attitude of the fighters which excited the audience inexplicably, the same mental state, communicated by fighters to audience, which will let one crowd sit apathetically through a long fight, and go crazy over another.

Brennan shuffled in close, eager to play his usual game of taking and giving. The Shadow boxed at long range, jabbing, cutting, stinging—and The Shadow excelled at one thing: the defensive art of beating an opponent to the punch.

To the reader unversed in the expressions of pugilism, the term, "beating a man to the punch" may sound cryptic. It is simply this: the two fighters stand toe to toe, dancing, shifting, alert, ready. Their eyes are glued. Suddenly one sees a flicker in the eyes of the other, a subtle light which flashes warning that a blow is coming. Instantly he steps in, his left flashes out, straight from the shoulder, where there is least lost motion, and the blow spans home, even while the blow of the other is still whirling. The other man's head goes back; his balance is lost—his blow lands, perchance, but never with the power of his body behind it.

But the game of beating a man to the punch is a dangerous one. A failure, a blow timed a fraction of a second wrong, and the other man lands on an unprotected fighter with all the force he has used to start his blow. More fights are won and lost in a second on this exchange of punches than by any other one blow or combination.

The Shadow knew he must save himself from punishment. And to do that he must stand close enough to tattoo

blows to Brennan's face, keeping him rocking. Once in close, and he knew the fight was over. Knock-out Brennan was Fate inside the other man's guard. Running away, O'Donnel knew to be an impossibility; by those tactics he must be cornered sooner or later.

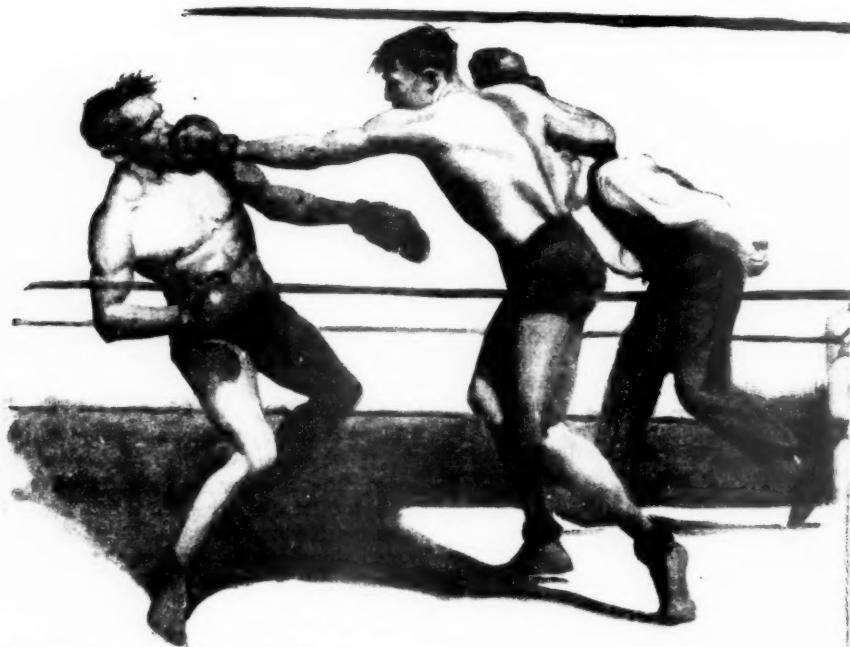
Brennan shuffled closer, watching, waiting. The Shadow, nervous, instinct-prompted, moved his left foot forward slightly; his left hand flashed out like a streak and back again, then out once more and Brennan's head rocked under the impact; then, before the other man had steadied himself, The Shadow's right streaked across and thudded on Brennan's ear, the faintest sort of a blood trickle appearing almost instantly.

It was done with bewildering speed, and The Shadow was dancing away, like a child who dares and is then afraid, before the crowd realized that it had seen a perfect rendition of the one-two punch. Then pandemonium broke loose and it roared applause. Brennan shook his head doggedly, grinned sardonically, and shuffled closer, ever closer.

There was something terrifying about the way he slid along the resiny floor. The Shadow quailed and danced away; that right cross, delivered with all the force of his body, hadn't even jarred the other man. He was of iron.

Again Brennan came close; this time the left flashed upward, but The Shadow, vibrant with fear, side-stepped easily, and again his right flashed against the side of the squat fighter's head. Twice Brennan landed, light, harmless taps; and both times The Shadow forgot his self-expressed intention of quitting in his wild desire to avoid punishment, a fear of risking the chance blow which might be sent home while he feigned exhaustion and collapsed.

Through inspiration of terror he boxed as he had never done before; it was the old story of the coward cornered, and his arms flashed back and forth like pistons. By the end of the round Brennan was bleeding from the ear, the nose, the lips. The gong sounded. The Shadow walked to his corner amidst the howls of the multitude,



The Shadow ripped home two lefts to the jaw—and brought the house to its feet, screaming demands for a knock-out.

more frightened than the moment he had stepped into the ring. One round of that awful ten had passed; true—but he had fought, and his hardest blows had been without effect.

"Brennan outclassed!" were the words sent out to the ticker-reading world, and the Knock-out's seconds shook their heads and inquired of their battered fighter whether he could stand the punishment.

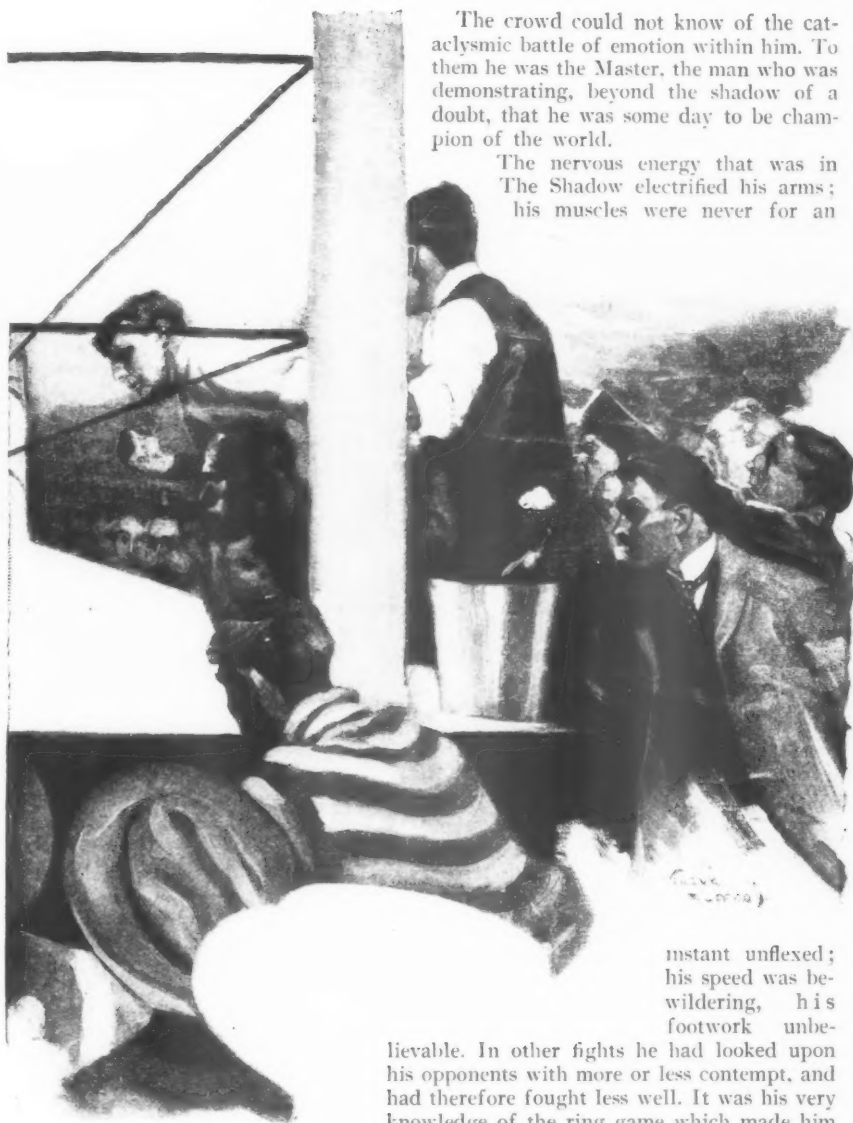
"You're wonderful, Mike," complimented Ketrick. "You've got 'im dead to rights!"

The Shadow did not hear. Thirty seconds of the intermission had passed; twenty-nine more; twenty-eight—and he'd be out there again with that murderous Thing, that Fighter Incarnate.

The gong. Fearful of being cornered, The Shadow leaped to the center of the ring and frisked nervously about the slow-moving Brennan. The crowd misinterpreted this as eagerness, and broke into yells of "Knock 'im out."

Once the two came close in a neutral corner, O'Donnel's body stiffened with fear, waiting for the impact of the finishing blow. But the self-preservation instinct helped him and he covered prettily.

He felt Brennan's throbbing body, saw the blood smears left by his battered face, heard Brennan's vicious grunting, saw that awful right go back and streak upwards. Mechanically, fearfully, The Shadow blocked, but even through his glove the impact jarred his entire body and in an excess of terror he slipped out of the corner and leaped across the ring, battering the pursuing Brennan with cutting, nasty jabs.



The crowd could not know of the cataclysmic battle of emotion within him. To them he was the Master, the man who was demonstrating, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that he was some day to be champion of the world.

The nervous energy that was in
The Shadow electrified his arms;
his muscles were never for an

instant unflexed;
his speed was bewildering, his
footwork unbe-

lievable. In other fights he had looked upon his opponents with more or less contempt, and had therefore fought less well. It was his very knowledge of the ring game which made him so ferocious. He knew that fights were decided by fractions of seconds; he realized that a

fake knock-out might be instantly turned into a real one by a lucky punch—and he grew more and more confident of staving off Brennan's rushes.

The second round ended as had the first: O'Donnel unmarked, Brennan a bestial sight, bloodied, apparently beaten. Brennan saw in his opponent fearlessness and ability. Had some one suggested that The Shadow feared him, he would have laughed. But Brennan was the real fighter; punishment did not feaze him; it was his creed to fight until he dropped. Physical pain did not matter—that was his business, the standing of pain.

The third round, the fourth, the fifth were replicas of the first two. O'Donnel inflicted terrible punishment; twice in the fifth Brennan went down, yet the end of the session found The Shadow breaking ground, dancing away, shooting home those self-preserving, cutting jabs, never endingly, relentlessly.

In the sixth round Brennan stepped in close and landed a stiff right and left to the body. O'Donnel snapped together like a jack-knife and backed away, arms held in close, trembling under a nauseous strain of fear. Then, as Brennan, jaw set and eyes glittering evilly, stepped in to mix things, The Shadow ripped home two lefts to the jaw, a right cross to the wind, another left—this time cutting Brennan's eye; and finished the fusillade with a right uppercut which sent the stockier man to the canvas and brought the house to its feet in a furor of excitement, screaming demands for a knock-out. Even the blasé men around the ringside, used as they were to fine boxing, forgot their usual critical, aloof attitude, and nodded enthusiastically.

As the men went to their corners at the end of the sixth, the house stayed on its feet, watching for the beginning of the next session, which it felt must be the end. Ketrick was crazy with joy.

"Finish 'im next round," he begged. "He's y'r meat!"

Dimly The Shadow realized that he was Brennan's master; he sensed for the first time that the fight was his. But before him stretched that appalling vista of four more of those terrible rounds in which he must face that fighting, punching, punch-absorbing beast. He knew vaguely that had he taken a bit of a risk and slugged occasionally he would have won by a knock-out before this—

Won! The idea was a new one. The idea that he might win seemed strange. But that punch, that jaw-breaking punch! Was it worth the risk—he shuddered unconsciously. Thus far he had managed to avoid it, but—

Through the seventh and eighth rounds the crowd stood on its feet and watched for the knock-out, but it did not come. They were excited and crazed by the phenomenal exhibition of boxing to which they were being treated. Here,

surely, was fighting of the master class. Never before or since had the ring seen anything like it. It was the skill of the world's best boxer plus fear. And always O'Donnel kept out of the way.

The ninth round found him even more careful, more fearful. Two more three-minute sessions remained—but the six fighting minutes loomed up to him as that many years. His fear of Brennan was in his heart; he could not overcome it. He still watched for his chance to quit.

They mixed it near the center and The Shadow backed round and round, slamming home lefts, a right, then more lefts until his hands felt numb. The thumbs of the crowd were down. Then—

With a snarl which could be heard plainly at the ringside, Brennan put his head down and thundered in close, elbows crooked, head down. The Shadow, stricken with fear, tried to cover, was thrown off his guard and hurled into a corner. He was caught!

The crowd gasped—then howled. O'Donnel's supporters shrieked shrill warning.

It had come! The eyes of The Shadow narrowed; unutterable fear possessed him. His body bent. Tense, sick, he waited!

Brennan's body unbuckled. His right, red with his own blood, whizzed past The Shadow's ducking head. As O'Donnel tried to shove out of the corner, Brennan stepped closer. Their heaving chests were nearly together now; each fighter could feel the labored breathing of his opponent.

Knock-out Brennan smiled faintly. This was what he had been fighting for. Once again that terrible right flashed past, and The Shadow made a wild attempt to sink to the floor, to fake a knock-out—but he only went against the elastic ropes and they hurled him back, guard down, unprotected, into the demon before him—

The ultimatum was there! To be knocked out—or to fight!

The Shadow uncovered in a flash. His right shot upwards and rocked Brennan's head; the squat bruiser righted himself just in time to receive a vicious left jolt on the stomach. The

Shadow made a wild attempt to break out of the corner, when—

Brennan's famous right hook to the jaw landed flush! O'Donnel's head went back. He waited for oblivion—a thousand lights flashed through his head! This, then, was the end! *This* was a knock-out. Vaguely he heard the shrieks of the crowd.

Then he felt his head clearing, and felt a thud of Brennan's glove against his protecting arm.

Brennan's famous punch had landed squarely—and he had stood it! He was not knocked out!

The Shadow never reasoned it out. He only knew that he had been hit, that he had stood the gaff; he felt that Brennan could not knock him out.

He found himself, stepped in close to him of the knock-outs, contemptuous of his blows, sweeping him off his feet. O'Donnel forgot his skill in his new-found red fury. His arms went like a machine, crashing, swinging, — unscientifically, mercilessly — right, left, left, right, left—

He fought! Brennan, weakened, broke ground. The crowd screamed, and O'Donnel cursed eagerly and his blows smashed home.

Men in the audience clambered to their seats and howled like maniacs; Ketrick, the imperturbable, screamed in excitement. Lawyer and laborer, scholar and scavenger, hugged each other. Here was *fight*!

The Shadow stopped momentarily, carefully gauged the distance, and his right shot upwards and landed flush on the side of the jaw. It was a perfect blow in every element.

Brennan dropped like a log, unconscious! The Shadow had won by a knock-out!

Very steadily he walked to his dressing room, his face and body unmarked. Then—

The old fear returned tenfold. Nausea seized him. His knees buckled. He collapsed on his couch.

Once more he was a coward!

Two nights later O'Donnel sat in the Finerty's front parlor, the lights turned low, the head of a penitent, pretty girl on his shoulder. She had begged forgiveness for calling him "Coward"—and he had granted it.

"Cut it, dearie," he said gruffly. "Knock-out Brennan was pie f'r me! He never had a chanct!"





R a c h e l

By Victor Rousseau

Author of "The Blue Dimity Dress," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY FANNY MUNSELL

THE prelude to the old priest's story had been a tragic suicide blazoned in an American newspaper which found its way with frequency across the Canadian boundary. It was a case of unrequited love and a marriage for rank.

"Ah, these American tragedies!" said the priest, shaking his head mournfully. "How dreadful they seem to youth, and how we grow accustomed to the trials of life when we grow older! What an inestimable blessing is faith, Monsieur! Sometimes I think of things that happened when I was a boy, of broken vows and hearts, and then I see these heroes and heroines in middle life, contented, patient, faithful. And it is the faith that heals these wounds! When I read such stories as this I wonder little that men and women tear each other's hearts to pieces, when they have not the faith to sustain them."

It was in the warm autumn of 1854 (he said) that Monsieur Jacob rode along the north shore of the St. Lawrence, with his saddle-bags full of samples of merchandise from his brother's

warehouse in Quebec. This was the young man's first business journey, and never had such sales been made before. Monsieur Esau, his brother, dealt in fine linens and cloths, fresh from the looms of France, and these were always in demand among the ladies of the seigneurs; but now each farmer's and each fisherman's wife was just as eager to buy.

"Certainly, Monsieur, my wife is now as good as any other man's," the *habitant* would say. "Are we not all equal now, under God, in Quebec Province? Then my wife must have napkins and table-cloths, as Madame would have."

The abolition of the seignories, with their old feudal rights, by parliament that year had given a great impetus to trade throughout the Province, and everywhere the merchants were discovering new customers. No longer need the poor *habitant* bring his grain to his lord's mill, leaving a tithe for the grinding; and his few barren acres, once rented by his seigneur's grace, were his for freehold.

The leaven of democracy had permeated Quebec. The humblest felt himself equal to the best. Some, who had raised

themselves by their own enterprise out of the ruck, looked the seigneur in the face boldly and passed by with hat up-lifted. Such a man was Charles Tremblay. He had already acquired substantial acres of good farming land. He ruled his household firmly. His wife being dead, he had not fallen under his children's sway, but remained master in his house.

The unfriendly said scoffingly that nature had experimented with Leah before she made Rachel, who was younger by one year than her sister. Yet both had the same gentleness of manner; neither was homely, and it would have been hard to tell either apart, unless one had seen them together. But when the moon shines, out go the nearer stars.

Leah was absent that October day when Jacob rode up to the farm-house of Charles Tremblay, with his full saddle-bags, and the guest did not know that Rachel had an elder sister.

All through the evening, while the two men chatted and smoked together, Jacob was casting glances at Rachel. He was a young man, not more than a year out of school, and his elder brother, though kind, had driven him hard. He had seen little of women, except such as came to make purchases at the shop; and Rachel, with her eyes of deep blue and her ebony hair, seemed to him the most beautiful woman in the world. Her skin was warmly white, except her cheeks, which glowed like roses as she sat bending over her embroidery, demurely listening to her father's denunciations of English rule. Those were the days when men still remembered and spoke of Papineau, who had raised the standard of revolt against the home country. Charles Tremblay had been foolish when he was young, and, though his acres had made him prosperous, he had the heart of a rebel still.

While Charles Tremblay raved and

denounced, and stamped the floor in fury, once or twice Rachel dared to steal a timid glance at Jacob, and her hands trembled over her embroidery. And Jacob heard hardly a word of all that eloquence, for his heart was beating as tumultuously as hers, and their thoughts were together.

After supper the young man brought out his samples, and Charles, who had taken him to his heart as a proper patriot, gave him a large order, while Rachel bent over the table, running the linen samples through her little hands, which sometimes touched Jacob's and were withdrawn hastily, and then found his by mischance beneath the satins again, a happening which brought new blushes to her cheeks. All that evening

they hardly exchanged a dozen words; but when hospitable Charles Tremblay stamped out of the room to find a candle to light his guest to bed, they heard each other's hearts beating in the darkness, and their hands found each the other's again, and were linked together, and in a moment Rachel was clasped in Jacob's arms, and they kissed, half ter-

rified, half wild with joy. Then Jacob was following Monsieur Tremblay up the stairs into his room, where he lay all night in a sleepless reverie, hardly daring to breathe, for fear the vision of happiness should leave him.

He did not see Rachel again before he departed, but the next morning, as he rode from the house, he saw a hand wave to him from an upper window. So he rode back to Quebec, with a song always on his lips, and joy in his heart, and the golden visions of youth dancing before his eyes.

Then came the long winter, and Jacob, bound to Esau's store, dreamed behind the counter, or, at night, in his little stove-warmed room. The city lay beneath his window, and, looking out at

A quaint little story of another Leah, the tender-eyed, and her well-favored sister Rachel, both of whom loved the same Jacob; and of the old Quebec country a hundred years ago, where they lived. Mr. Rousseau is writing more stories—they are much in the nature of legends—and living on the scene. We believe they are destined to be another popular RED BOOK feature.

night, he would see in imagination beyond the snow-bound hills the little village of St. Joseph, set into the hollows of the Laurentian Mountains. In March he was to go on his rounds again, for Esau was well pleased with him and he was earning money now. When he returned he meant to stay for a day or two with Charles Tremblay and make his suit secure. At last March came, and before it had gone Jacob was riding out from Quebec, with saddle-bags well

not many of Esau's goods were sold on that journey, and the farmers who had found Jacob such good company the autumn before, when he passed by, yawned when he went to bed, wondered what they had seen in such a dull fellow, and determined not to spend quite so freely until they had seen other men's samples.

But Jacob hardly knew whether he sold or not. He lived in a rapture. On the third morning he was delirious with happiness. Had he met his beloved upon the road he might well have passed her by and never known her, so unreal had her image become to him. It held his imagination so that he saw nothing until his horse slipped and stumbled, throwing the rider



While Charles Tremblay raved and denounced, Rachel dared to steal a timid glance at Jacob, and her hands trembled over her embroidery.

stuffed, and two nights' vigils before him at farm houses before he reached St. Joseph.

But if the year 1854 had been a prosperous one for trade, 1855 was one of the poorest on record. The *habitant* had spent his money. The farmer and the fisherman looked at Jacob's samples and shrugged their shoulders. Some other time, perhaps, but now money was scarce, and was a free man better off than a villain if barley brought no more? So

against the saddle-bags. Then, to his astonishment, Jacob became aware that the sun was past the zenith, and the ground white with snow, which powdered him with flakes from hat to shoes.

It was late March, but winter had come back with all the strength of January. The cold grew more intense; the storm-clouds thickened, and the horse plunged to his fetlocks in the snow, which drifted upon the gale, so that the rider could see nothing of the way.

Jacob became aware of an intolerable aching in his eyes. It was the warning of snow-blindness. While he dreamed, he had been staring at the snow-covered ground for hours and never known it, and now his eyeballs felt as though they were being pierced by needles.

He held the horse loosely and let it pick its way, and toward five in the afternoon, the animal remembering, turned up the track that led to the farm; thus Jacob came to the door.

The farmer, who came bustling out, knew him at once, perceived his trouble, and helped him to dismount. Then, after the horse was stabled, he bathed Jacob's eyes with cold water and bandaged them.

"A few days and you will be well, Monsieur," he said. "It will be impossible to continue your journey for a while. You must become my guest, and my daughter shall be your nurse."

Charles Tremblay, old-fashioned and patriarchial, had never told Jacob his daughter's name. Now, hearing the compassionate, gentle tones beside him, he never doubted that this was Rachel. When they ate she sat beside him and cut his food for him.

"You are welcome a thousand times, Monsieur Jacob," said Charles Tremblay. "It is not often that one sees a patriot now. *Grâce de Dieu*, we are all Englishmen nowadays!"

He told him that there was room and to spare, because his other daughter had gone to St. Boniface, to spend the week with her aunt, who was ailing.

Jacob suspected nothing, and thus the trap that fate had set was sprung. Mademoiselle Leah looked with favor on the young man from the moment she saw him. She was a romantic, sentimental girl, and had never seen her mate in the young farmers and fishermen of the district. And Jacob was a young man of good appearance. His prospects were excellent, said her father, winking shrewdly, for Jacob had told him that Esau had promised him a partnership that summer. If Leah thought that Jacob's love-making was a trifle precipitous, she ascribed that to his city ways and was properly impressed thereby. Perhaps the blind, infatuated wooer

thought Leah a little cold, and wondered that she said nothing of that happy hour in October; but before the week had passed, and the bandages were taken from his eyes, he had asked Monsieur Charles for his daughter's hand.

Charles Tremblay was delighted. Though a well-to-do man, and much respected, he could not but remember that he was sprung from humble stock; his father had been only a poor tenant of the seigneur, and had carried his barley to the mill to be ground. He bantered Jacob in his rough, kindly manner.

"I was not slow at courting my woman," he cried, "but at least I saw her face before I kissed her."

Jacob was too much infatuated to understand the meaning of the farmer's words; and even then it would have been too late. Monsieur Tremblay continued:

"It is perhaps lucky for Leah that you have not seen her sister."

The bandages were taken from Jacob's eyes. When he saw Leah for the first time he still imagined her to be the girl whom he had seen and loved the year before. And if there was any prompting in his heart, or any undercurrent of fear, Jacob thrust it aside.

"We shall tell Rachel when she returns," said Leah happily. "It will surprise her, and she shall share in our joy."

In those days letters were few and far between, but Jacob had written to Esau, apprising him of the accident and of his engagement. It was his plan to be married as soon as possible and to take his bride back to Quebec. Esau was a good brother. He did not answer, but he closed his warehouse and came in person, bringing gifts with him. The banns were read. The marriage was a week away when Rachel came home.

Somebody had told her, and she had hurried back with a numbed and aching heart. The news was incredible. She came in at the door, with a blanched face, her heart hammering in her ears. She saw Jacob beside her sister, one arm thrown round her, telling her of his plans, his dreams, his love.

"This is Jacob, sister," said Leah, and

the women fell upon each other's hearts. That was Rachel's excuse for tears. She clung to Leah and wept, and her grief could not be stilled.

"It is for happiness," she sobbed.

But she knew there would never be any happiness for her again. Hearts do not lie, like speech, and the things that had been unsaid had been the best remembered.

She had watched Jacob riding away, fearful that he would look up; and then, afraid that he would not, she had waved her hand to him and gone back to her mirror; and, looking at the reflection of her flushed face and shining, eager eyes, she had never doubted but that the fairy prince would ride back when the spring came. How happy she had been that winter, dreaming of her lover's return!

Jacob stood like a man stunned. Now he understood the trick that fate had played, though all were guiltless. He never knew how the remainder of the day passed. It seemed interminable, and they appeared to move in some impossible and fantastic dream. When he pressed Leah in his arms his lips were cold as snow on hers. But at last the day ended, and Esau, good sleeper that he was, had stamped upstairs to bed, and Monsieur Charles Tremblay, having bewailed the apathy of the land and predicted a bloody uprising against English rule, had gone for his candle like any peaceful citizen. Jacob and Leah were alone. She clung to him.

"So now thou hast seen my little sister, Jacob," she whispered, "and I begin to grow jealous of her, because she is fairer than I. Art thou sure that thou lovest me better? Tell me truly, beloved, because I feel heavy-hearted, and if thou dost not love me I do not want to live."

Jacob was a good man. He had been a good son and a good brother, and he did not falter now. He pressed his lips to those of his betrothed.

"I love thee best, Leah," he answered.

Then Charles Tremblay came back with his candle and they bade each other good-night. When he left her, Leah was smiling with loving lips and eyes that rested tenderly on his.

He took his candle and went upstairs to bed. When he had closed his door he blew the light out and sat down before the window. This was the night on which he was to put his memories aside. The weather had changed; spring had arrived—the air was mild and soft. The snow had gone, except from the mountain tops, and in the St. Lawrence below the ice-floes ground and cracked as they hurried to their burying-ground, the sea. The water flung them upon each other turbulently. When he was a boy, Jacob had had a longing for the sea. It seemed to offer the gift of freedom to those who came to it. He had put that dream away, as many a merchant's son must do, but he had never wholly forgotten it. Now, as he sat there, he felt like a trapped beast. Flight seemed his only refuge. The memory of Rachel maddened him, and the wreck of his hopes enclasped his honor and seemed its ruin too.

If he had lost Rachel and never seen her again! But he had seen her in her living beauty, and he must see her for years unending, live near her, watch her beauty mature and dwindle, while each knew the heavy secret of the other's heart; until at last, when youth was long past, they would stare at each other through the mists of age and know that life had been lived in vain.

Jacob stretched out his arms. "Rachel! I love thee! Come to me!" he breathed.

Noiselessly his door opened. Jacob spun round. Before him stood Rachel. She held a candle in her hands, without a candlestick, and the grease dripped down over her dress. To his last day Jacob saw her thus, as she stood there, the vivid picture he had carried in his brain, the glowing cheeks, the dark hair—love embodied, love incarnate—all the love in his heart. How could he thrust such happiness away?

Her eyes were not cast down, as when they had met before. Love, which had made her timid, now made her bold. She wore a traveling cloak over her simple dress. She thrust its folds apart and knelt down at his feet and drew his face against her heart, holding him in the hollow of her arms; and they re-



She thrust apart the folds of her traveling cloak and kneeled down at his feet and drew his face against her heart.

mained thus, speechless and motionless, for a long time.

"Rachel," said Jacob, lifting up his head, "thou knowest how this happened, and that I have never loved any woman but thee."

"I know," she answered. "Leah has told me."

She rose up and looked at him, more boldly still. Then Jacob understood, and, clasping her in his arms, he was ir-resolute no longer. A mad exaltation took the place of his despondency. He opened the door and they crept softly down the stairs together. They heard the breathing of the sleepers in their rooms as they passed down to the floor below, where Leah lay. Then Jacob heard his name whispered softly.

He looked at Rachel, but she had not spoken; she stood listening, finger on lip, fear in her eyes. The name was spoken again. The door of Leah's room stood partly open, and she was dreaming of him and murmuring in her sleep.

Jacob looked at Rachel with equal terror.

They gained the entrance to the house and were standing side by side in the darkness, feeling the damp turf beneath their feet and seeing the stars above.

They went forth, hand in hand, down to the Gulf. They looked over the dark water. The St. Lawrence roared among the shattered floes, and in the east, where the full moon clung to a bank of cloud, they saw the river widen toward the sea. Islands lay there, extended under the cloudy sky, like wardens watching the approach to their homeland. To sail out into the world, together!

But at each step Jacob had felt his heart turning to a leaden weight in his breast, and his feet were leaden too, and duty called and hope was dying. If they went forth into the world they could never return, for neither Esau nor Charles Tremblay would ever forgive, and their name would become a byword among their people. The land was dear to them, and the world outside hostile and strange. The ties of home are

strong; they draw and bind the *habitant* to his soil, and none can evade his destiny.

Both understood that, and each read the other's mind, for at the river brink they turned and looked at each other in mute questioning. They clung together upon the strand and their tears were mingled.

"She loves thee, Jacob," said Rachel, weeping. "She speaks thy name even when she sleeps, and thou fillest her life in dreams as well as waking."

Jacob did not reply, but waited for the inevitable words.

"She has always loved and trusted me," sobbed Rachel. "She could not live if thou didst abandon her."

The glamour was gone out of their hearts, but it had been replaced by the stronger instinct of obedience. Simple people of the soil, trained to self-sacrifice and duty, they shuddered at what they had contrived.

They retraced their steps through the darkness toward the farm-house. There was a strange peacefulness in Jacob's heart. They had put aside all that life had to offer them of joy; but they had chosen instead the better part which should not be taken away. They halted at the door and looked out for the last time together. The rush of the river and the roaring of the floes seemed like the hurrying of the years to come. Then they went softly upstairs. Outside the room where Leah lay, they stopped.

"Jacob!" was murmured softly from within.

"Jacob!" murmured the woman upon the stair. "Good-by, my love," she whispered.

"Such is life everywhere, Monsieur," said the priest meditatively, "and such it is meant to be, having sorrow and joy, patience in bearing grief, and its rich fruits of contentment when the blessing of faith is there. But when faith is not there—"

He folded the newspaper and dropped it into a drawer.



DO NOT FAIL TO READ

—the last installment of

Whether you've read the preced-

ing chapters does not matter. You will lose yourself in its story as you have done only once in a while with the masters; and after the last line you will look up flushed with the power of the thing and feeling you have been eye witness to a tremendous situation.

Persis Cabot, a beautiful, petted young member of an exclusive New York set, has married "Little Willie" Enslee, physically and mentally insignificant but possessor of wealth, when she is unalterably in love with another man. Enslee marries Persis because he has always adored her.

The "other man" is Harvey Forbes, a poor young army officer. When he and Persis meet after the marriage, their love overcomes their scruples. Enslee only finds the true situation when he overhears Forbes beg Persis to free herself and go with him. Forbes spurns her when she refuses because she is afraid of what people will say.

Enslee tries to shoot Forbes, who wrenches the gun from the little man. Smarting under the bitterness of his wife's faithlessness and his own powerlessness, Enslee leads Persis in to dinner as if nothing had happened, in order to keep the affair from the servants.

That dinner scene is the dramatic triumph of this final installment.

What Will People Say?

By Rupert Hughes

Author of "The Last Rose of Summer," "The Old Nest," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

LXVI

IN that famous Enslee dining-room where brilliant companies had gathered for a generation, giving and taking distinctions, and where Persis in her brief reign had mustered cohorts of pleasure

that out-gleamed them all, only two chairs were drawn up to the table; and that was contracted to its smallest circle. All the other chairs were aligned along the white marble walls with a solemn look as of envious uninvited ghosts sitting with hands on knees, and brooding. The walls were broken with dark col-

umns like giant servants, and between them hung tapestries as big as sails, telling in a woven serial the story of "Tristram and La Beale Isoud."

Only three servants waited now: Roake and Chedsey in the somber Enslee livery, whispering together as they straightened a rose stem or balanced a group of silver; and Crofts, eternally bent in an attitude of deference, standing near the door—the great golden portal ripped from the Spanish palace of one of the senior Mrs. Enslee's ancestors.

For all their listening, the servants had been unable to learn the details of the immediate feud, though they knew that war was in the air.

Crofts had kept them at their tasks and at a distance, and Crofts either had not heard or would not have told, if one of them presumed to ask him.

He had lived through so many family tragedies, that he rather celebrated in his heart a day of good spirits, than remarked a period of stress. And of all times, he felt, a good servant shows his quality best when the atmosphere is sultry with quarrel and a precarious truce is declared in the dining-room. There flourishes the genius for self-effacement and invisible, inaudible provision of whatever is needed, that makes service an art. Crofts in the plain black, slightly obsolete, evening dress, looking rather like a poor relation than a servant, had been in his day an aristocrat among servants. To-night he was old and alarmed. He had seen when he announced the dinner that he broke in upon some desperate conflict and his old heart fluttered with terror. He had heard so much gossip at the servants' table, such ribald comment and interchange of eavesdroppings that he wondered what new stain threatened the old name of Enslee."

He loved the new Mrs. Enslee. All the servants did—as much as they disliked Mr. Enslee. But they all felt that she was as dangerous in the house as a panther would have been in a wicker cage. And they all gossiped with other people's servants. And one of them on her evenings off was meeting a very attentive gentleman with brindle hair and half an eyebrow. She did not know his business, but he was generous; he took

her to turkey-trots, and he loved to hear her talk about her employers.

Suddenly Crofts lifted his head, and threw Roake and Chedsey a glance of warning: they came to attention, each behind a chair, watching with narrow eyes where Persis slowly descended, as into a gorgeous dungeon, the three velvet steps leading down through the red-velvet-curtained golden portal.

First they saw Persis' slipper, a golden slipper on a slim gold-silk stocking. Next the gleaming shaft of her white satin skirt with its wrinkles flashing and folding round her knees; and then a rose-colored mist with glints of gold spangles; a few flowers fastened at her waist, the double loop of a long rope of pearls; then her wide white bosom with half the breasts revealed in the deep V between. And next her shoulders; her long throat passionate and bare save for one coil of pearl-rope. And then her high-held resolute chin; her grim red lips; her tense nostrils; her downcast eyelids; her brow; and finally the crown of diamonds sparkling in her hair.

Her velvet-muffled footsteps grew faintly audible as her heels advanced with a soft tick-tock across the black and white chessboard of the marble floor. There was such a hush in the room that even her soft short train made a whispering sound as it followed reluctantly after her.

Then Enslee's dull black feet appeared on the steps; his short legs; the black rimmed bay of white waistcoat and shirt and tie, and the high, choking collar where his fat little head rested like a ball on a gatepost.

In the rich gloom of the big hall, the table waited, a little altar alight and very beautiful with its lace and glass and silver and its candles gleaming upon strewn roses.

Overhead, the massive chandeliers hung dark from an ornate ceiling powdered with dull Roman gold. It was illuminated now only by the fretful glow of the fire slumbering beneath the carved mantel ravished from a bishop's palace in Spain.

In such a scene the audience of three servants awaited the performance of the polite comedy by the farceur and far-

ceuse who would pretend to leave their personal tragedies in the wings. The actors made their entrance with a processional formality, faced each other and were about to be seated in the chairs the men had drawn back a little.

But the dignity vanished when the male buffoon, glancing at the array before him, broke out with a sharp whine:

"Where's my cocktail?"

There was such a twang of temper in his voice that Crofts heard at once, and made a quick effort at placation:

"Very sorry, sir, but the other servants being away, I was not able to learn just how you had it mixed, sir."

"Just my luck!" Enslee snarled. "When I need a bracer most, I can't have one." He shook his head so impatiently that Persis foresaw calamity, and hastened to intervene:

"Let me make it for you, dear."

Enslee threw her an ugly glance and wanted to refuse, but could find no reason to give except the truth: that he hated to accept any more of her ministrations. And the truth was the one thing that must be kept from these menials at all cost. So he said:

"Mighty nice of you!"

Persis went to the vast sideboard and, while Crofts fussed about her, handing her the shaker, the ice, and bottle after bottle, she prepared the cup as if it were a mystic philter of love. She poured each ingredient into one of the glasses and held it up to the light to make sure of the measure; then she emptied its contents into the shaker, and filled it again from another bottle; and so when the square, squat flagon of gin, the long-necks of Italian and of French vermouth and the flask of bitters had contributed each its quota, she pondered aloud:

"That's all, isn't it?"

Willie, who had strolled to the sideboard in a kind of loathing fascination, spoke up:

"Here, barkeeper, you're forgetting the absinthe."

"Oh, yes," she said, recalling his particular among the numberless formulas: "Six drops of absinthe and twelve drops of lemon."

Crofts passed her the absinthe and finding a lemon, sliced it across, and

handed it to her on a plate. She held it over the shaker and squeezing, counted the drops:

"Nine—ten—eleven—twelve, oh, there went the thirteenth! That's a bad omen." She was so overwrought that a little genuine fear troubled her. Enslee felt it too, but would frighten the bogie with indifference:

"Hang the omen, so long as the cocktail's not bad."

Persis nodded with a difficult smile, and setting the top on the shaker, said: "Now, Crofts."

The old man was so slow and feeble with his agitation that she snatched it from his hand and shook it herself, the ice clinking merrily. Then she lifted off the top and poured the cold amber through the strainer into the two glasses and dried her chilled hands on a napkin.

Willie was too eager for the stimulus to go back to the table and take the cocktail there. He lifted his glass:

"We'll take it standing at the bar."

And he reached for an imaginary foot-rail as he had seen the vaudeville comedians do. Persis laughed and he laughed; but sorrowfully. Still another idea occurred to him in his determination to enact domestic bliss:

"And now what's the toast? To the absent one?"

The ghastly patness of this unnerved him, but Persis came to the rescue with: "Toasts are out of date." And Willie, setting the glass to his lips, guzzled it with that chewing way they had never been able to correct him from since his infancy. Persis stood a moment with a far-off look of fierce regret in her eyes, then drained her glass swiftly, and dabbed her rouged lips with her handkerchief. Crofts held out a little tray and Willie set his glass down so hard that the stem cracked. He gave Crofts the blame in a sullen look, then went back to the table and sat in the chair that Roake pushed under him.

He was up again instantly with another complaint. Willie was by nature one of the tribe of waiter-worriers. In his present tension, he was doubly irascible.

"Where the devil is my cushion?" he barked. "You know I can't carve without my cushion."



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

In a long writhe of pain, Persis gathered the tablecloth about her left side as if to staunch the flow. "There shall I do?" And she turned her head this way and that, panting as one pursued, an awful thing to die—just now of all times, with



was a rattle of falling glasses and a chink of tumbled silver, as she moaned: "Oh, what shall I do? what bewildered, utterly at a loss. "Oh, what shall I do? I don't want to die. It's no chance to make good the wrong I've done."

The cushion was whisked under him instantly.

He stabbed at his canapé of caviar with his fork as if he hated it, ate but a morsel of it and turned aside in his chair. Persis, watching him with anxious eyes, gave Crofts a command in a glance, and the plates were removed, and replaced with oysters, the men bringing everything to the table, but Crofts alone serving Their Majesties.

Crofts was old and slow and unusually tremulous with anxiety, and the rebukes he had had. His deliberation was maddening to Enslee. The old-fashioned deference of Crofts' manner was only further irritation.

Persis' own heart was wretched enough with its load of shame; she was hard put to it to sit and smile at the husband who had caught her in the arms of her paramour and heard him casting her off. But she had that social understanding of the actor's creed that the show must go on to the last curtain, no matter what had preceded it or what might happen between the acts or what might follow. She was certain of only one thing: that she and Willie must sit out this dinner somehow.

The entr'actes in the solemn mummery were the spaces between the courses, when the servants left the room for a few moments to bring on the next thing.

When the caviar had been nibbled and rejected, the oysters set down and refused without being tasted, the two men went into the pantry for the soup tureen and the hot plates. The swinging door oscillated with little puffs of air like sneers, and a breath ran around the tapestries hung on the walls. Ripples went through them in shudders, and as the wrinkles traveled, averted faces seemed to turn and glance quickly at the Enslees, then turn away again.

With all the surreptition possible, Crofts and his lieutenants brought in the silver urn and the ladle, and the plates, and set them down on the serving table behind the screen of Spanish leather with its glowing landscape and its gilded sky.

But Enslee's raw nerves shrieked at the soft thud of plate on tray, the infinitesimal

click of ladle on tureen, the very endeavor not to make a sound. He fidgeted, bit his knuckles, wrung his hands out like damp cloths, played a tattoo on the arm of his chair and passed his hand wildly across his eyes. At length he whirled and shouted:

"In God's name, less noise! less noise!"

Crofts turned to bow and made a trifle more noise. And when he took the plate from Roake's tray and set it before Enslee his hand trembled perilously. It was Enslee's favorite soup, a luscious *purée Mongole*. He lifted one spoonful now to his lips and put it away in disgust. His ignominy was so vile that it sickened his stomach. He had been told that his wife was unfaithful to him; he had found it true; he had wrought himself to a frenzy of revenge upon the destroyer of his home; but the lover instead of leaping from the window like the typical man of guilt, had taken the husband's weapon from him, denounced the wife and left the wrecked home in triumph.

Enslee had endured all these disgraces; why should he add one more? Why should he play a part before his own menials? Why should he care what they thought? But as mutinous soldiers keep the line automatically, so a lifetime of paying devotions to the ordinances of etiquette held him to the mark now.

Seeing that Persis had not even made a pretence of lifting her spoon to her lips, he nodded to Crofts: "Take it away."

The failure of a dinner was a catastrophe to Crofts and he forgot his wonted reticence enough to ask:

"Isn't it good, sir? Sha'n't I tell the chef to—"

His solicitude brought him only a reproof:

"Crofts, if you speak again, I'll have the other servants serve the dinner. Take it away, I said."

Hurt and frightened, Crofts hurried the soup and its apparatus off. As he went out with his aides, the swinging door went "Phew!" and the tapestried figures glanced and whispered together.

As soon as he was alone with his wife, Enslee's voice rose querulously:

"If Dobbs ever leaves us in the lurch again I'll fire him for keeps. This old fool gets on my nerves. Everything is going wrong here. The whole house is falling to wrack and ruin. Ought at least to have decent servants—if I can't have a decent wife!"

Persis smiled patiently at this, but as with lips bruised from a blow:

"I trust, Willie, that you won't forget yourself. All these doors have ears, you know."

"You bet they have!—and eyes, too. Are you crazy enough to think that lowering our voices will conceal the truth from anyone? Don't you realize that those hounds out there know everything that goes on in this house? Don't you understand that your good name and my honor were gossiped away downstairs long before my dishonor became public property?"

Persis felt a panic in her own heart at his manner. Still she tried suasion: "I implore you to postpone this. At any moment Crofts will be back."

"Crofts, eh?" Willie shouted. "Crofts! Crofts will be back! Why, do you imagine for a moment that even that deaf old relic is ignorant of this intrigue you have carried on? Don't you know that every servant of ours that has left the house for weeks has carried through the area-gate a bundle of news and innuendo and suspicion and key-hole information to be scattered broadcast in every servant's hall in town?"

And then he heard Crofts at the door and in spite of him, habit throttled him; he pulled down the comic mask he had pushed back from his dour face. He ransacked his brain for something humorous to serve as a libretto, and he was reminded of a story he had laughed at heartily before he learned that his own household was a theme for laughter. He began to giggle uncannily, grewlously. Persis looked at him, wondering if he had gone mad and begun to gibber. But while Crofts and the others served deviled crabs in their grotesque shells, he began to explain his elation, over-acting sadly:

"I heard the best story to-day, about Mrs. Tom Corliss."

Forgetfully Persis, from her own glass

house, protested: "Oh, don't tell me anything about that woman."

Enslee sneered: "Oh, you're always so easily shocked—such a prude, so conventional!"

Persis understood, and blanched, and said: "Go on; I'll stand it."

Enslee began to snicker again, taking some support in his shame from another man's disgrace:

"Well, you know old plutocrat Crane?"

"Not old Deacon Crane," Persis gasped. "that passes the plate at church?" Willie nodded. "What can he have to do with any story about Mrs. Tom?"

Enslee he-he'd: "That's the fun of it. Mrs. Tom it seems, one day when Tom was off to the races, entertained the dear Deacon at a little dinner—served *à deux*. He used to give her tips on the market and back them himself for her, and she—well, he was talking about the present day craze for dancing with bare feet *et cetera*, and she vowed that she wasn't ashamed of her feet either—and so she made the Deacon play Mendelssohn's Spring Song on the pianola, and—"

He looked up to find that Chedsey, while pretending to be very busy at the sideboard, wore a smile that extended almost into the ear he perked round for the gossip. Willie choked on his own laughter, and roared:

"Chedsey, leave the room! And don't come back!"

Chedsey slunk away and Roake became a statue of gravity. Crofts had not heard at all. Willie finished his story without mirth:

"Anyway, Tom Corliss came in unexpectedly just then and—well, when the Deacon finally got home, his wife met him in the hall; he told her he had been sandbagged by a footpad; and she believed him!"

Willie found Tom Corliss' shame so piquant that he began to relish his food. Crofts, a little encouraged, nodded to Roake and led him out for the next dish.

Persis took no comfort from other people's sordid scandals. They seemed to have no relation to the pure and high tragedy that had ended the romance of her own love. Seeing that they were

alone again, she expressed her disgust before she realized its inconsistency:

"And where did you pick up all this garbage?"

Enslee was outraged at this ingratitude for his hard work: "Oh, it shocks you, eh? So beautiful a veneer of refinement, and so thin!"

"Where did you hear it?" Persis persisted, lighting herself a cigarette to give her restless hands employment. And Willie answered:

"Mrs. Corliss' second man told it to Mrs. Neff's kitchen maid and she to Mrs. Neff's maid and she to Mrs. Neff; and Mrs. Neff to Jimmie Chives and he to me—at the Club."

"At the Club?"

"Where I heard of your behavior."

"You heard of *me* at the Club?" Persis gasped.

"Yes, that crowning disgrace was reserved for me. Bob Fielding took me to one side and said: 'Willie, everybody in town knows something that you ought to be the first to know—and seem to be the last,' he said. 'I hate to tell you, but somebody ought to,' he said. 'Your wife and Captain Forbes are a damned sight better friends,' he said, 'than the law allows,' he said."

The room swam and Persis clung to her chair to keep from toppling out of it.

"So that's what he said. And what did you say?"

"I didn't believe him—then. I was too big a fool to believe him, but he opened my eyes and I came home to see what was going on. And I saw!"

Persis was on fire with a woman's anxiety to know if any champion had defended her name. She demanded again:

"What did you say to Bob Fielding?"

And Enslee answered with a mincing burlesque of dignity:

"I told him he was a cad, and I didn't want him ever to speak to me again."

"And you didn't strike him?"

Enslee cast up his eyes at the thought of attacking the famous center-rush; then he lowered his eyes before her blazing contempt. She demanded again incredulously: "You didn't strike him?"

Enslee dropped his face into his two palms and wept; the tears leaking

through his fingers. Persis felt outlawed even from chivalry. She gagged at the thought: "Agh! the humiliation!"

Enslee lifted his head again, his wet eyes flashing: "Humiliation?" he screeched in a frenzy of self-pity. "You talk of humiliation? What about me? My father and mother brought me into the world with a small frame and a poor constitution. They left me money as a compensation. And what did my money do for me? It bought me a woman—who despised me—who dishonored me before the world. And I'm too weak to take revenge. I'm helpless in my disgrace, helpless!"

He sobbed like a lonely woman, his eyes hid in the crook of his left arm, his elbow on the table, his little hand clenching and unclenching. His tears brought tears to her. It was the first time she had ever felt sorry for Willie; had ever realized that a weak man does not select his weaknesses, though he must endure their consequences. She had often justified herself by the plea that she had not chosen her own soul but must get along with it. That defence was her husband's too.

The swinging door thudded softly, and Willie raised himself in his chair, but he could not quell the buffets of his sobs, and he dared not put his handkerchief to his eyes. And so Crofts, bending close to remove the crabshells, noted the grief-crumpled face and the drench of tears; his mind went back to the time when Willie Enslee was a child and wept in a high chair in his nursery. Before he could suppress it, the old man had let slip the query:

"Why, Master Willie, you're not crying?"

Willie, with splendid presence of mind, answered:

"Nonsense, you old fool, it's that deviled crab. There was so much cayenne pepper in it. It w-went to my eyes."

Crofts was desolated.

"Oh, I am sorry, sir. The chef shall hear of it, sir. And the roast now—shall I carve it, or will you?"

Willie looked drearily across at Persis: "Do you want any roast?"

She frowned with aversion: "I couldn't touch it." And Willie shook his

head to Crofts: "We'll skip the roast. What's after that? Be quick about it!"

Crofts lowered his voice as if a game-warden might be listening, for it was after the season had closed: "There is a pheasant, sir—sent down from your own run, sir. It is braised, *financière*. I'm sure you'll like it. You may have to wait a little, seeing as you didn't eat the roast, but it's worth waiting for, sir."

The old man was pleading both for the honor of his menu and for the welfare of his master. Willie nodded curtly and the roast that had ridden in so royally in its silver palanquin with its retinue of cutlery and its hot plates was removed in disgrace.

Once more husband and wife were abandoned to themselves. But now Persis looked with new eyes at the heap of misery collapsed in the opposite chair. All these years Willie had tried to win her love with gifts, with splendors, with caresses, prayers, compliments, and with weak experiments in tyranny. And he had failed dismally. Now his failure and his shame had crushed him into abjection.

And now her heart went out to him with a melting tenderness. But now she was unworthy to approach him. Now it was she that must plead:

"I'm awfully sorry for you, Willie. You haven't had a fair deal. I never realized what a rotter I've been till now. But if you'll let me, I'll try again; I'll try hard, really, honestly, Willie. The only man I ever seemed to care for has taken himself out of my life. He hates me as you hate me. I haven't much of anything to live for now, except to try to square things with you. I'll do better by you. I'll be on the level with you after this. Honestly, I will. We'll find happiness yet."

"Happiness!"

Even at this belated hour the world's ambition was so dear to him that he was wrung with longing:

"It might have been possible if I hadn't found you out. I was a fool to trust you so blindly, but I was a happy fool. I didn't know how happy I was till I learned how unhappy I can be. Oh, Persis, how could you? how could you? You seemed so cold and so proud, and

you've let that man make as big a fool of you as you've made of me."

She took her lashings meekly, hoping thereby to achieve some atonement. "I know, I know," she confessed. "But we can keep other people from knowing. We don't have to tell all the world, do we?"

Again the vision of stalking gossip enraged him: "The world—ha! it always knows everything before the husband suspects anything. I've said that about so many other fools I've known. Now it's my turn. Here we sit at dinner in this ruined home as if everything were all right. Think of it! After what I saw and heard, I'm sitting here trying to persuade a pack of flunkies that you have been a good wife to me."

"It's hideous, I know, Willie. I'll go away to-morrow. You can divorce me if you want to. I won't resist. It will be horrible to drag your name through the yellow papers; but I won't resist—unless you think you might let our life run along as before, until gossip has starved to death? We'll be no worse than the rest, Willie. Every family has its skeletons in the closet. The worst gossips have the worst skeletons. Let's fight it out together, Willie—won't you? Please!"

She stretched an importunate hand across the table to him, but he stared at her with glazed eyes: "And go on like this the rest of our lives? Sitting at table like this every day, facing each other and knowing what we know? Knowing what other people know of us? Keep up the ghastly pretence till we grow old?"

"It's not very pretty, but let's be good sports and play the game. We tried marriage without love, for you knew I didn't really love you. You knew it, and complained of it. But you married me. I tried to do what was right. I ran away from him in France, and I tried to love you and unlove him. But you can't turn your heart like a wheel. We've married and failed. But nearly everybody else has failed one way or another, Willie. Nobody gets what he wants out of life. Let's play the game through. You said to me once—do you remember?—you said, 'Gad, Persis, but you're a good loser.' And I've lost a little too, Willie. I've had a pretty hard day of it too. Let's



• JAMES MCCHITCHMERY FLAGG

Forbes snatched his big revolver from the holster in his trunk tray and set the muzzle of it to the belly of I've said, never breathe a word of it to a soul. Promise, or—" Hallard smiled and raised his half-eyebrow.



Hallard. "I ought to shoot you for this, and I will, unless you swear that you will never print a word of what He tolded his hands behind him and leaned against the gun. "You're a little excited, Captain, aren't you?"

be good losers, Willie; let's try it again, wont you?—wont you, please?"

She sat with hands clasped and thrust out and prayed to him as if he were an ugly little idol. But contrition did not seem to render her more attractive in his eyes. It only hardened his heart against her: "When I look at you, I can only think what you've been to that man, where you've gone, what you've done. You sit there half-naked now—ready to go to the opera—to expose your body before the mob—my body—my wife's body. You show it in public—and you dance it in public with anybody—with him—the first time you saw him, you were dressed like that and you danced with him, that loathsome tango. You taught him how.

"You've set everybody laughing at me. They're all saying I was a blind, infatuated fool before. Now you want them to fasten that filthy word *complaisant* on me. You want me to overlook what you have done, and what you've brought me to. I'm just to say, 'Well, Persis, you've had your lover, and your fling, and you're tired of each other, so come home and welcome, and don't worry over what's past; it's a mere trifle not worth discussing. What's the Seventh Commandment between friends?'"

She was trying to silence him, but he had not heeded the return of Crofts till the pheasant was placed before him in all its garnishment, and the plates and the carving fork and the small game-knife. He was ashamed, not of what he had said of her, but of his own excitement:

"Is the knife sharp?" he asked for lack of other topic.

"Oh yes, sir," said Crofts. "I steeled it myself."

Willie began anew, groping in his tormented brain for something to dispel the silence. The result was a dazed query:

"By the way, my dear, what's the opera to-night?"

"'Carmen,'" she said.

He brightened: "Oh, of course. That's the opera where the fellow kills the girl who betrays him, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"With a knife like this—eh?" And with a fierce absent-mindedness he made a quick slash in the air. The knife was small and curved a little and it fitted his hand like a dagger. He chuckled enviously. "Ah, he was the wise boy, that *Don José*. He knew how to treat faithless women. He knew how to talk to 'em. A knife in the back—that's all they can understand."

Crofts was too anxiously trying to avoid spilling a drop of the wine he was pouring to heed the warning gestures of Persis. She felt that the breaking-point of Willie's self-control had been reached. She must dismiss the audience. She spoke hastily:

"Willie, my dear—my dear!—Wont you send for some champagne—or sherry. I have this red wine and, besides, we've skipped the roast."

"Oh, yes," Willie agreed. "Crofts, down in the wine cellar in the farthest end—you'll find laid away by itself one bottle of *L'âme de Rheims*—one bottle, the last of its ancient and honorable name. Bring that here."

As Crofts stumbled out on his long journey, Willie commented ominously: "It's a good time to say good-bye to that vintage!"

His roving eyes discovered Roake standing aloof. Willie snapped his fingers and yelped at him:

"Get out! and stay out!"

Roake withdrew in haste, and Enslee muttered:

"I'm sick of seeing so many people standing around, staring, smirking, listening, thinking about me. I wish I were on a desert island."

He sat forward to the pheasant, set the fork into it, and paused with the knife motionless. Suddenly there were beads of sweat on his forehead, and he was panting hard. Then he groaned:

"My God, he took my revolver away from me!"

His eyelids seemed to squeeze his eyes in anguish. When he opened them they were bloodshot and so fierce that they seemed to be crossed. He laughed:

The remainder of this final installment of "What Will People Say?" begins on page 197 of this issue.

The Creek of Gollensallag!

By
Kennett Harris

Author of
"Managing Raimond," etc.



ILLUSTRATED
BY
NORMAN
BORCHARDT

*BEHOLD here the stirring saga
of Neck and was driven away
filched a whole boat-load of stolen
thus paroned his soul to the Devil:
the Devil; and how he at last won*

*of Thady O'Dea—who wooed Eva of the Fair
because of his poverty by Eva's father; and who
gold from the ship of the pirate Danes, and
how Thady gained freedom from the gold and
Eva of the Fair Neck. Listen, then, to his saga.*

THE lovelorn young
man in black calico
shirt, having first for-
tified his cynical opinions with
sundry modern instances, gleaned
Heaven knows where and how, summed
up:

"If a guy's got the stuff, he's all
right; if he aint, he aint, and that's all
there is to it.

"He's gotta git it," he added, bitterly.
"Don't matter how."

Mr. Mulready, the Nestor of the
McGonigal flats and Confidant in Ordinary to Troubled Youth, tamped the fire
in his pipe bowl with a calloused little
finger.

"I'll not deny that there's a smither
av rayson in that, Jamesey," he con-
ceded. "There's a manny that hoolds to
that notion an' ixpresses ut wid inergy
borderin' on apoplexy as long as the gin-
tlemenly barkape'll stand for ut. On
the other hand, there's thim that's got no
more av a bank balance an' no more
stocks an' bonds an' debintures an' other
incriminating ividence than meself, an'
no more hair on the top av their heads,
that's still respected an' aven tollyrated.
They sit out on their dure steps, as ut
might be me, watchin' the childher play,
an' smokin' their pipes over the mimories
av their good deeds, an' the copper

touches his hilmel as he passes by, as
ye'll see Halloran do me if ye'll wait
a while—an' me face is good wid the
grocer, Jamesey, ye remind me av Thady
Oge O'Dea, av Ballynacally. There's
sthrong p'int's av differince bechune ye,
an' wid that, there's a raysimblance.

"He was a poor lad, Thady was, clane
limbed, well putt up, black like ahl the
O'Deas, but no taste av harm in the
four bones av him—a kind natured gos-
soon that wud have had iverybody happy
an' was ahlwis ready to do a hand's turn
for a neighbor at the haulin' av the nets
or the ricklin' av the turfs, as nade was.
"Twas some cinturies ago that he lived
where Fergus makes a broad mouth at
Shannon. Wan av the O'Deas had a
castle there an' Thady's father had a bit
av a houldin' on a hillside under him.
A dacint man was Thady's father, an'
there was a plinty under his roof while
he lived, but a boatload av Danes came
up the Shannon wan day, an' whin they
wint back, his wife was a widdy. By ray-
son av that, Thady grew up widout the
luxuries to which he wud have been ac-
customed if he'd had thim regular, an'
the thought av what he missed was bit-
ther in his mind at orra times, an' afther
that, ut was what ahl the poor neighbors
missed that worried him.

"For why is there no roast paycock

an' turbot an' thruffles an' wheaten bread an' clar't wine iver set on our table?' he axes his mother, wid his nose cocked in contempt av his dinner.

"'Thim's for the rich, avick,' says his mother. 'The poor, Hivin help thim! must be contint wid the white trout an' the herrin' an' the humble collop av venison an' the barley loaf, wid a swig av the home brew to wash ut down. Hard ut is, agra, an' me heart is wrung entirely to see ye want, but what can't be cured must be endured, or aiten fresh.'

"'For why must I go abroad wid no more clo'es than dacency requires, an' thim patched shameful?' he axes.

"'Bekase we are shameful poor, little son,' says his mother. 'Tis well your legs is used to ut, but 'tis a sharp knife in me bosom whin the wind is in the aist to see the goose flesh on thim. Yet they do be tellin' me that breeches is mighty bothersome, onaisy things. The rich has their own troubles, praise be!'

"'How'll I get riches?' asks the lad.

"'Fight for thim,' she makes answer.

"'Me father fought an' ahl he got was the edge av the soord to his neck bone,' says Thady. 'Tis too risky intirely.'

"'Work for thim,' says his mother.

"'But—' he begins.

"'By depitty,' says she. 'But that's later, an' ye must cut the turf yourself, darlin'; so take the slane an' out to the bog wid ye. By the time ye've finished the cuttin' av a dark, I'll be out to spread.'

"'If I was rich, there'd be no turf cuttin' but for thim that liked to do ut,' says Thady Oge. But he tuk the slane—which ye'll mind is a soort av a spade but not enough av wan to cahll ut a spade—an' he finished the dark that he'd started the day before; but it wint to the sowl av him to bend his back to the like. An' as the time wint on, the more respect he had for his back an' the less for his betthers, though whin the master av the castle, Flaherty O'Dea, rode out wid his hunting thrain afther the deer, in ahl the splindor av green broadcloth an' goold lace, the lad threw no rocks an' kept his mouth shut on his rale sintimints. Yet he spoke his mind aven av Flaherty—now an' ag'in—an' wid choice av hearers.

"'Will ye tell me how he got ut?' he'd ask.

"But divil a mother's son av thim cared how. Flaherty had ut an' cud hold ut against ahl that was like to come against him an', as ye say, he was ahl right wid public sintimint—barrin' an odd curse here or there, which is no detrimint to a sinsible man.

"Thin kem a time whin the heel av the oppressor an' the grind av poverty, as ye wud say in a ginerall way, fell heavier than iver on the lad's sperrits. By rayson of the colleen dhas Eva ut was—'Eva av the Fair Neck,' she was cahled through the countryside. Not that ye'd have marked the neck av her more than her face. 'Eva av the Goold Locks,' she might have been, or 'Eva av the Thrim Waist,' or 'Eva av the Bright Eyes,' for she had thim ahl, an' to the back o' that, a soft voice an' a tinder heart an' a hard ould nut av a father, cahled Goll the Wan-Eyed.

"Ut happined that wan day Thady lukked at her an' behould ye! the rose pink dyed her fair neck an' deepened the red in her cheeks, an' Thady's cheeks, burned too, an' he turned his eyes away wid violince an' against their sthrong inclination. An' on another day, they met an' blushed, but thin Eva, out av her suparior courage as a faymale, spoke, an' Thady, though his tongue was thick an' his mind in a fog av bliss, spoke too. Little they said an' that little to the point an' immatherial, but the next time, 'twas me bould Thady that comminced the conversation an' said the most, an' that most nonsinsical.

"Ah thin! 'tis a swate time that, whin the blood is young an' stirrin' an' the boy an' the gyurl come together. Good ut is in the clare, clane air av the hills by the flowerin' rushes an' the sunlit strame, or in the reek an' sut where there's rotting sidewalks under fut an' bricks an' morthar to bound the eye. Ah, the glad meetings an' the slow, unwilling partings!

"So ut wint with Thady an' Eva, an' for long, by rayson av the illigant saycret nooks there was. Still love an' smoke cannot be hid; an' at last, Eva's father kem upon thim, an' he was slicing at the twigs av a stout sprig av blackthorn

wid a long crooked knife, as he kem. An' he said no word—only lukked at Thady under his bushy brows as he stud before thim an' thrimmed his shillalah. Stiddy he lukked an' his mouth was set hard; an' under his cowl'd gray eye, Thady felt his blood tingle.

"Say ut," says Thady, prisintly.

"I've little to say," says Goll, shiftin' his hand to the small end av the big stick.

"I've a high respict an' a warm frindly fayling toward ye," says Thady, 'but if ye offer for to shrike me wid that,' says he, 'I'll have to thry if the knob is too big for ye to swally. Just a word in sayson, an' no offince meant,' he says, stoopin' for a rock.

"Go to the house, Eva," says her father, but Eva stayed.

"Go to the house, acushla machree," says Thady. 'Sure I cannot run wid you by to shame me.'

"Will ye go?" her father shouted.

"The poor gyurl lukked from wan to the other in doubt av what to do, but she wint, though slowly, an' wid her chin on her shouldher—until she got to a convenient place where she cud peep out unseen.

"Thady tossed the rock in the air and caught ut. 'Now,' says he, 'will ye say the short word or two that's to be said, aisy an' civil?'

"Well, ould Goll was wan that wud not go out av his way to dodge a shindy, but the edge was off av the love that he'd had in his young days for annything that promised a skin av 'sore bones. He tuk note that Thady's limbs was stout an' sthrong an' that the rock in the lad's hand was jagged, an' he'd had a touch av the rheumatiz whin he'd got from his bed that mornin'; so he timporized.

"Ahl is, I'll not have ye courtin' av me daughter," says he. 'I'll overluk

what's passed, and as for the future, I'll overluk that too, an' me eyesight is grand. Let me catch ye with her again an' a rock wont save ye—nor a quarry av thim.'

"I'll see to ut ye don't catch me thin," says Thady.

"Ye'll live the longer, and maybe die the aiser," says the old man. 'They tell me there's worse deaths than hanging.'

"The thought av that must be a comfort to ye," Thady tould him. 'But,' says he, 'if ut's a fair question, for why do ye object to me?'

"Ut may be a fair question but ut's a foolish wan," said Goll. 'Aren't ye as

poor as skimmed say-wather? Barrin the ould sow an' the bon-neens that's your mother's an' the rags that's on ye, what have ye got to make ye a match for the daughter av a man av property, ye impudent scoundrel?'

"Is that ut?" Thady axes him. 'Is that ahl that stands in me way?'

"Sure ye'll find ut a high wall an' a deep ditch, ma bouchal," says the ould man. 'An' so, the top av the mornin' to ye, an' mind what I've tould ye, I've barked this day; nixt time, I'll bite.'

"The smith lost his timper an' bit the anvil, but he bruk his teeth.'

"But light as Thady spoke, his heart was heavy, for the house where Eva lived was high set and wid a wide view by day, an' the dogs that the ould man kep' was mighty savage an' wakeful at night. An' if the colleen wud walk abroad, be sure there was soft fallin' feet an' sharp eyes to folly her. More than the wanst, Thady set out detarmind that he'd face the ould man if he cud but see the gyurl, but as often as he'd set out, he'd turn back bekase av some conthrytong, such as the buzz av an arrow by his ear or the rowlin' av a smashing big rock across



his path from the top av the hill—hints that Goll had his wan eye open.

"So the lad gev up for the time wid hope for the future, a way some lads have, an' he tuk to miditatin' on the means to wealth. What he wanted an' ahl he axed was a pot av goold, an' he was willing to work for ut too, if he cud but find out where 'twas buried. But there was none to tell him, barrin' 'twas the leprochaune. He's the *gracy-goulda*—the shoemaker, ye'll mind—to the Little People, an' want ye clap eyes on him as he sits at his work he'll take ye to where the goold is hid. But ye must not take your eyes off the crayture or he'll be gone like a whiff av smoke. Mighty cute he is, the withered little divil, an' full av his thricks, so that av the manny that's seen him there's few has been the richer for ut.

"Well, Thady wud lay in the grass an' set his mind on the leprochaune till he cud see him as plain as a pikestaff, hammerin' on a brogue, wid his lapstone bechune his knees. No bigger than a small sized lump av chalk, he'd be, dried up an' wrinkled, wid a big pair av barnacles astride the long nose av him. An' Thady, in his mind, wud take the ould sthruckawn by the neck bechune his thumb an' finger an' niver lose sight or grip av him till the pot av goold was at his feet. An' thin. . . .! An' thin. . . .!

"An' prisintly the boy wud hear a 'tick-tack, tick-tack, tick-tack' from near by, like the sound av a hammer, an' he'd get up an' go softly wid his brith drawn in, aisy as puss on the cyarpet—an' find 'twas a woodpecker knockin' at a tree to see if the grubs was at home.

"Or, on a day av sun an' shower, he'd mark where the ind av the rainbow fell; an' mostly ut was behind a hill or in the deeps av Shannon wather. But there was enterprise in him, an' more than the want he rowed out an' sthrained his eyes for a gleam av yalla in the green beneath his boat's keel, an' felt his heart jump at the flash av a salmon. Wan time the rainbow ind fell on the hither side av a broad dyke an' he tramped four good Irish miles wid a spade an' pick on his shoulder to the place; but whin he got there he cud not tell widin an acre where the goold lay. He wint to

the diggin' in disperation, but 'twas a job for powder, an' powder hadnut been invinted, so the blisters on his hands was ahl he tuk away that he hadnut brought wid him.

"So he wint back to the soft grass, an' at last, as he lay there, Eva kem to him. She had slipped away from him that watched her an' there was a happy hour before him to spind. An' happy ut was, though the tear was in her eye an' on her cheek as she tould him av her father's unkindness, for there's a power av satisfaction in the miseries av the young. An' prisintly Thady tould her av his disappointments, and av the hopes he had, an' how, whin he'd found whet he sought, they wud marry. An' there wudnut be a bare back nor an impty meal chist in the barony from that day, for his hand wud be open wid plinty for ahl.

" "'Tis for that I love ye,' Eva tould him. 'For the kind heart av ye, alanna, for the thought that ye take for the poor. Sure there's a blessing for the charitable beyant most.'

" 'An' the church shall have her tithe, an' more,' says Thady, wid a burst av generosity. 'We'll not forget that, avourneen.'

" 'Ye're as good as ye are beautiful!' cries Eva. 'Sure 'tis the lucky gyurl I am!'

" "'Tis nothin',' says Thady. An' sure ut wasnut.

"At last they tore thimsilves apart, wid arrangements made for meetin' at another day. But 'twas a long day before they met, as ut happined.

"On the afternoon av the morry, as Thady lay in a nook av the bank av Fergus, he heard far off across the wather to the aistward the sound av a song to a chune that he'd niver heard before, sung outrajis bad by many voices. An' as he listhened, the song was louder an' sthronger, an' at last, cowerin' behind the bouchlawn that grew in his nook, an' wid his heart fast beating, he saw a quare boat comin' down the Shannon as fast as wind an' tide cud take her, an' raisin' the ullagone he'd heard, was forty or more outlandish men in mail armor, wid their hair in braids, an' they was wavin' soords an' shakin' spears



Cups there was for dhrinkin', large and small, an' arm rings and finger rings an' collars of gold an' silver.

as they shouted. There was round shields hung on the edge av the boat, an' the bow av ut was raised in a hidjus dhraggin's head painted green, wid a big red mouth.

"'Hivin help us," says Thady, wid white lips, "'tis the Danes! Sind they'll split on the Herring Rock!"

"But the felly at the steerin' oar swung ut in time an' they wint clare; but at the shoal beyant, he turned too sharp, an' the wind tuk the sail an' drove her wid a rush for Inishmurry, an' there, on the inside, they wint aground, wid a shock that spilled half a dozen av the villians into the wather, not a hundher yards from where Thady lay hid.

"At that, there was a bigger ullagone to a differint chune, but prisintly they ahl listened while a fine tall man wid a long, yalla beard, an' goold torques on his arms, spoke to thim an' whin he'd done, waved his hand. Thin wan afther another they splashed overboard, two av thim carryin' ropes, which they made fast, an' two bearin' a big kettle. An' Thady tuk notice that the soords an' shields an' the axes an' spears that they had was not left behind. The big tall man wint last av ahl.

"On a bit av a beach they built a fire an' set the kettle on an' Thady smelled pitch. 'They've a hole to plug an' they'll wait for more ebb to get at ut, says the lad to himself. 'Twas a load off his mind, so ut was, for he thrimbled at the sight av the flat-faced, hairy bla'guards wid the horns on their hilmets an' their coats av mail, like fish scales, an' the sound av their gibberish was ill to his ears, for he thought av his father.

"But prisintly he lukked from the men to the boat, which by this time was canted over towards him, an' there in a heap was the glint av the stuff he dramed av, kishes an' sacks there was av ut, an' here an' there, the flash av a fool, red as blood. Sure the murderin' rapparees had more than their pains for their throuble this raid! Divil a leprochaune wud have shown more treasure. Thady's mouth dribbled an' he br'athed short. Thin, av a sudden, he squeaked like a hare in a dog's jaws, for a hand was about his neck tight as a hoop av

iron on a cask, an' the brick-brown face av the chief av the Danes was bent over him.

"Ye may say that there was fear in Thady's heart an' small blame to him! Ah! av thim Danes was big men but this was the biggest, an' lavin' the clutch that he had on the lad's neck, the mere sight av his arm, which was for size like a common man's leg, wud have struck terror to the sowl av most. An' his chest was broad as a bull's an' muscle bulged under the shiftin' steel ahl over his body. He was a grand man!

"But ye'll mind whin Thady lukked at the face av him, he tuk courage, for 'twas a face ye'd like, whin 'twas not clouded wid anger, an' now the strong white teeth showed in a smile through the fine-spun beard, an' there was fun in the blue eyes. Like a boy wid a new-caught squirrel he seemed, yet he was no boy. Thin he spoke in good Irish an' his voice was plisint.

"'Is there anny more av ye?' he asked, an' he let his fingers slack for Thady to answer.

"'I'm by my lone,' says Thady. 'An' meant no harm,' he says. 'I was here before ye kem, a long hour.'

"'For what?' axes the Dane, an' his eyes was keen.

"'For solitude to think me thoughts,' Thady answers, 'Ye'll not kill me?' he whimpered.

"The big Dane lukked at him mighty curious. 'Wud ye mind so much thin if I did?' says he, 'if I killed ye aisy—? Sure if I let me men handle ye, they'd take the hide off ye first, for to pass the time av waitin'. I see no other way but to twist the head on your shouldthers—or a stroke av me soord if ye'd prefer ut.'

"'Lave me go,' Thady begged.

"'For to raise the counthry?' says the Dane. 'No. The thoughts av ye was plain as ye lukked at what was in me boat. I read your mind thin.'

"'An' why not?' the lad axed him. "'Tis the wish av me sowl that's there, the cure for the ills that tormints me. If I had ut—'

"'What wud ye do if ye had ut?' says the big felly.

"'I'd see none but happy faces where I wint,' says Thady. 'I'd relave the ne-

cissities av the poor: I'd be a crutch for ahl the weak to lean on an' a spreadin' roof for thim unsheltered. I'd convart the haythen—by depitty—for the church wud find me a thrue son an' no naygur. An'—an' other things,' says he.

"The Dane laughed an' stroked his goolden beard. 'Small thanks wud ye get,' he said. 'Tis no world for the weak an' they're well out av ut. I've a betther use for what I've won—to gather hayroes around me an' fit out sailing ships to take us where there's blows to be sthruck in fight an' deeds to be done that the bards will sing whin we're dust. Let the poor be poor an' the weak die an' rot an' be forgotten an' let the sthrong live an' beget the sthrong av tall, brave women, an' whin their time comes, die a man's death by bright steel on a bloody ground wid the shout av the war cry to speed thim away.'

"'Still ye'll let me go,' says Thady, afther a little. 'There's none I cud bring against ye short av the castle but a handful av poor fisher folk, an' Flaherty is at Breaghva wid the best av his men anyway. Let me go an' I'll make no minton av ye till ye're past harm av anny hereabout.'

"'Ye'd betther let me kill ye aisy,' says the Dane. 'Life will niver be good to ye wid the disposition ye've got, poor crayture! If ye had some sperrit now—Well, have your way, but don't blame me if you're not satisfied. Wud ye like to thry what ye can do wid the knife at your girdle—me wid only the bare hands—to save your self respect?'

"'If ut's plasin' to ye, I'll not throuble ye to putt yourself out so far,' says Thady. 'Thank ye kindly.'

"The Dane stritchd his big body. 'Well, I'm thirsty,' says he. 'Raise the counthry, if ye've a mind, but I'd stay here a while, if I was in your shoes. Ye might be seen if ye bruk cover.'

"He turned as he spoke an' wint down the bank to his men, while Thady cowered behind the bouchlawn, thrimblin' at his escape, but wid anger in his heart.

"Whin he made boud to peep out again, the sun had set an' the boat was on ut's side, wid men hammerin' at the plank an' plasterin' the gables. The others was about the fire, aitin' an' horns

av liquor passed from hand to hand, an' the chief drank deep wid thim. An' prisintly the cloutin' av the leak was done an' the dark kem on, but the tide was still low. An' soon the clatter av the talk that there was ceased an', wan by wan, the Danes pulled their skin mantles about thim an' stritchd thimselves to sleep. Only the chief stayed awake wid his long soord in its sheath across his knees, an' Thady, seein' that, cursed him an' thim.

"The thing that ground him was the contempt that the Dane had showed. Ut burned an' stung, an' he wished that he had taken the knife afther ahl an' died with the gush av hot blood over his hand. Thin his mind was busy with schames an' plans, an' though he might have been a league away by that time, he stayed snug in his nook until the chief nodded over his soord, an' started awake an' nodded again, an' prisintly lay down an' slept. An' ahl the time Thady cud hear the ripple av the flood tide on the bit av beach, an' see the glimmer av the fire-light upon the boat's mast as it slowly began to right. Thin he stole softly away, his mind far to up.

"He'd not far to go. Just to a bit av a cove around the bend, an' there was a boat moored, wid the oars convaynient. Thady got in ut, an' dark as ut was he rowed aisy as at noonday to where the rover's ship was afloat on an aven keel an' sthrainin' on the ropes. There he stopped an' listhened, but there was no sound but snores, so he slipped up alongside an' onto the deck. Half an hour later he was out in the Shannon tuggin' like a madman against the flood, wid a boat weighted nigh to the wather's edge wid kishes an' sacks av goold, an' daylight found him up the creek av Goleen-sallagh hid away among the rushes where only the divil himsilf cud discover him widout he'd been tould.

"So weary was he that he fell aslake an' the sun was high in the hivins before he awoke an' tuk the first good luk at his trisure, an' thin he was flabbergasted intirely. Cups there was for dhrinkin', large an' small, an' arm rings an' finger rings an' collars av goold an' silver, brooches set wid precious stones an' coined money; but what sthruck him

av a heap was the crasses an' reliquaries an' images av the blissed saints that there was, an' the sacred vessels, as he well knew, that was the plunder av churches an' monasteries.

"'Baithershin," says he to himself, 'this will have to be gev back.'

"'For why?' whispers the Divil, at his elbow, 'The churches that they kem from is burned an' the praists kilt, an' a hot fire an' a meltin' pot is aisy come by. Kape your tongue behind your teeth, ye gomeril!'

"But Thady putt the thought behind him for the time. Yet he hid the sacks an' the kishes in a cave in the bank that was conveynient, an' at last wid a circumspection that was to be wid him long, he sthruck off across the downs to his mother's cabin.

"Manny was the questions she putt, an' short an' unsatisfactory was the answers he made to thim; but she guessed that ut was the throuble av Eva that weighed upon him, an' afther a while, she let him ate an' dhrink in peace. But ut was a heaviness to her sperrit that her son was rude an' ugly av spache. Sure 'twas not like the boy that had come to her knee wid his griefs for the sootherin' word an' the kind sthroke an' the kiss av love.

"Wid the dawn av day, he was up an' stirrin' for his bite an' sup, an thin off, sthraight as a pigeon's flight to the cave where he had hid the goold, an' there he stayed fingerin' the stuff an' devisin' an' schamin' what he wud do wid ut an' makin' a poor fight wid the Divil that follyed him an' kept wid him an' had brought Black Care for company.

"An' as often as he thought av restitution, the Ould Boy made his sensible objections. 'As to the church, I've toold



ye,' says he. 'An' as to the other rightful owners, thim piruts has made a clane swape, 'tis like, an' if there is heirs left—for the sake av argymint—ye'd have a life job widout pay makin' sittlemints. Sure robbin' from robbers is no robbery, an' by ahl rights, the goold is your own.'

"Then he'd think av the good he might do an' the Divil wud laugh. 'The Dane—pity he drinks!—had a livil head on him an' knew the world,' says the Divil. 'What did he tell ye?' 'Small thanks ye'll get,' says he, an' he was right. 'Let the sthrong live,' and

who's sthronger than the man that's rich? Me dominions down below is full av the weak.'

"'I cud marry Eva now,' Thady miditates.

"'Ye cud do betther wid your advantages an' prospicts,' says the Divil.

"'Ye dirty scoundhrel!' says Thady.

"'An' yet ye might,' says the Divil.

"Thin Black Care sthruck in. 'If 'tis known that ye've trisure, Flaherty O'Dea will claim ut as lord av the manor. Goll av the Wan Eye will ax how ye got ut. A hundher rapparees hereabout wud slip a skene in your ribs for wan av the goold rings, an' to my mind, this is no safe place. Annybody might happen onto ut. An' there's the Danes. How will ye luk widout your skin I wonder!'

"At that, Thady began to carry rocks an' turf for to close the cave mouth an' he worked at ut ahl that day. An' ut kem to his mind as he worked, that he was to have met Eva that morning, but he'd forgot. 'Well, ut can't be helped,' says he.

"'I'll sow grass an' plant a few bushes an' creepers furninst ut', he says, afther a little. An' thin he wint home.

"An' ut kem to his mind there that his mother lukked mighty ould an' worn an' that if she had a shrappin' gyurl to help her wid the work that bent her back, ut wud be a thing he cud afford. But at that, Black Care considered that ut wud make talk, an' the Divil said that the ould woman was used to work an' wud be unaisy widout plinty to do; so he putt the matther aside to be attended to wid the spadin' av the gyarden patch an' the stackin' av the turf.

"After that, day by day he was down to the cave, an' soon he had ut closed up ahl but wan hole big enough for him to crawl through on his belly, whin he had rolled away the rock that covered ut. And the seed av grass that he had sowed sprung up an' the bushes grew an' flourished, an' the bad seed in his brist sprouted an' grew rank, an' still grew. But though he had had the word from a neighbor that the Danes had gone an' there was nothin' in the way av the meltin' pot, whin he found where he cud sell some av the goold for handy money, yet he judged the time hadnut come to spind. An' though he kep' some av the crowns he'd got in his pouch for to give him the feelin' av wealth, he let thim stay there though Misery held out the beggar's hand as he wint by.

"There was no help in him now for a neighbor. He was a busy man, busy in the darkness av the cave that a rush dip bethethered little, countin' the coined money over an' over an' weighing the images av the blissid saints in his hands. An' Black Care putt lines in his forrid an' about his mouth an' thinned his cheeks, an' the Divil hardened his heart an' made him niglict his duties. He wint no more near the houldin' av Goll the Wan-Eyed; he sildom thought on Eva.

"She, poor gyurl, had sought him manny the time, but the counthry by the cave was disolate an' hard to find an' he was at little place ilse, barrin' at home. She'd word av him from a neighbor at orra times, but that was ahl but the wanst, by chance. Thin ut was that Thady tould her that hope was gone from him an' that she wud best forget him.

"An' will ye forget me?" she axed him, wid a thrimblin' lip.

"Niver," says the liar. "But 'tis hopeless intirely. Your father has forbid ut an' ye're a good an' obadient daughter."

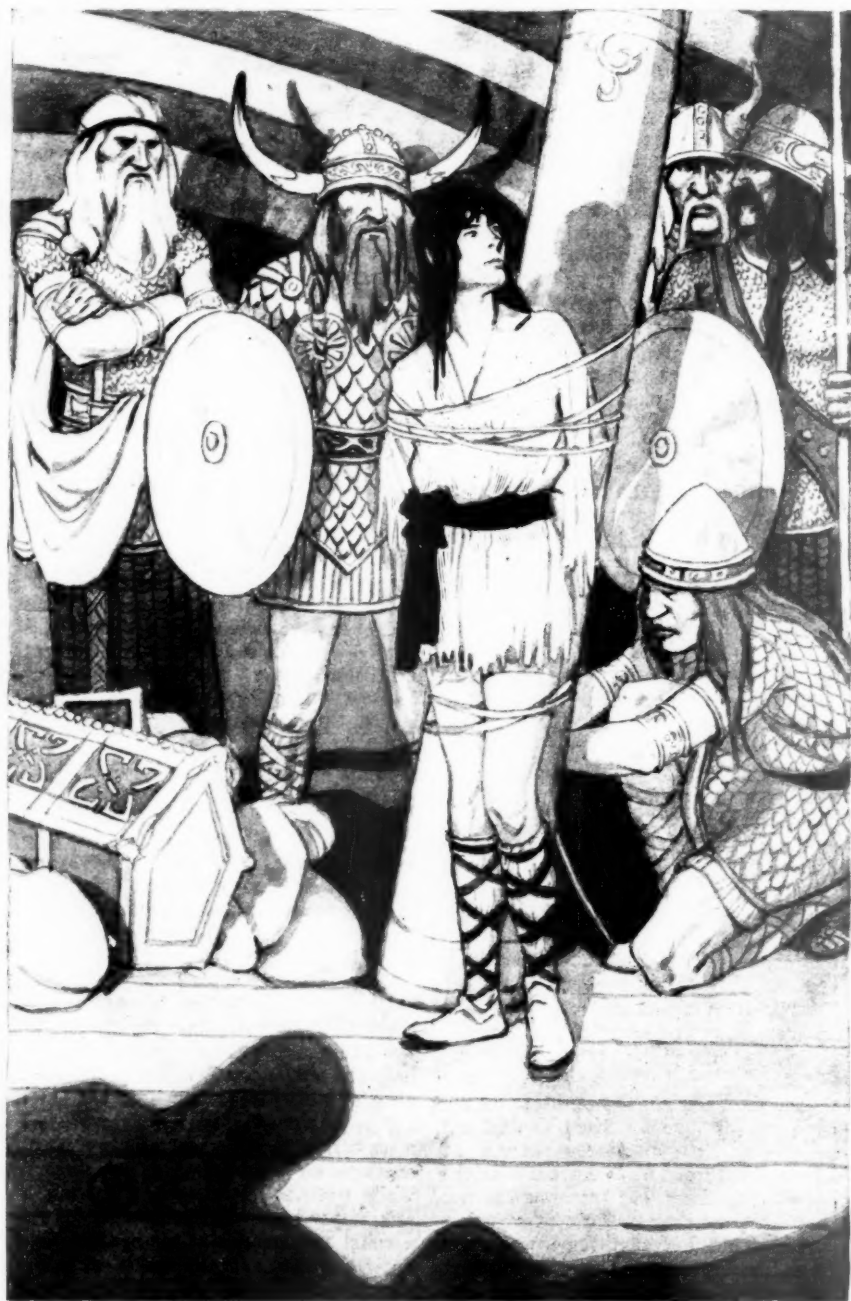
"He may change," she says. "Ye are changed, yoursilf, Thady darlin'. Ah thin! I know the faithful heart av ye. Ye thry to make ut light for me wid cowl luks an' cowl words, but your face shows the sorrow that's in ye. Ye'll not desayve me aisy. Yet take this to your bosom to comfort ye: I'll not stop lovin' ye to the last day that I live, an' if we maynut marry, I'll marry no one."

"That was the word she left him wid an' he, shame on him! let her go willingly, though he had so much grace as to pretend the grief he didnut fale, an' promise the faith he'd bruk ahready for the dirty stuff in the dingy hole.

"He had been rich for a year an' keepin' company wid Care an' the Divil for as long, whin the day av reckonin' kem, as ut comes to most, rich an' poor, in wan way or the other. He'd set out for the cave watchful as iver an' wid less thought av throuble maybe, an' there was no sight or sound av man whin he bent his back to rowl away the stone that blocked the hole; yet as he began to squirm through, a clutch like iron closed about his ankles an' a jerk that wud have pulled a tree from its roots, for the power av ut, brought him back to daylight.

"He let out a screech an', as the grip on his leg was loosed, he sat upright an' stared, wid fallen chops, at a peddler-man who was sated on the stone bowlder ferninst him an' grinning like an ould rain-spout. A peddler-man he was, by his dress an' by the pack that was tossed to the wan side, a peddler-man wid a shock head av yalla hair cut square below the shouldthers, an' wid no wepin, only the staff across his knees an' a bit av a skene wid the pouch at his belt; but he was the biggest that iver wagged a ready tongue an' spread silk to a woman's eye, an' at the flash av his strong white teeth as he laughed, there was a sick, impty faylin' in Thady's insides an' a whirl av dizziness in his head, for he knew the Dane av the beach at Inishmurry.

"'Tis the second time I've caught ye, little rat," says the Dane, whin he'd



"Death's too aisy for ye," says the Chief av the Danes. "A slave, ye are and a slave ye'll be till I've wore ye out."

stopped laughin'. 'Yisterday I lost ye hereabouts, but I knew ye wasnt far an' made me dispysitions; an' now I've found your hole. Where's the goold that ye stole?'

"Thady jerked his head to the burrow in the bank, for he cudnut spake.

"'By the luks av ye, it's little ye've thrived on ut,' says the Dane, 'an', by signs, 'tis little good ye've done. A month an' more, I've trudged path an' bypath wid the pack on me back through the counthryside here, an' the poor is still poor. There's hunger an' disthress still, for ahl your binefactions. I heard no blessings on your head from thim I'd spache wid; but I saw an ould woman bent under a burden av peats that a son, rich or poor, might have spared her, an' I saw her delving wid a spade that her poor weight wud drive but a scant inch into the earth; an' that was by the dure ye came from yisterday.'

"The peddler-man's eyes had a frost-cowld sparkle, like the glint that's in the ice-spears droopin' from the thatch on a hard bright mornin'. Thady's own eyes fell before thim.

"'Wan word av kindness for ye I had,' the Dane wint on, 'an' that three days back from a soft-voiced gyurl. But what she tould me an' what I guessed made me sorry I'd spared ye. Not to spake av the goold.'

"'Tis ahl there, just as I tuk ut,' Thady made out to say.

"The Dane wagged his head at him. 'Betther I'd kilt ye,' he says, 'far better!'

"'Betther, indade!' says Thady, an' he got to his feet. 'Kill me now an' be done wid ut,' he says. 'I'll take me death blow standin' at laist.'

"The Dane rose up, towerin' over him, an' laughed. Thin he putt a silver whistle to his lips an' blew, an' prisintly, there kem a splashin' in the creek an' men in horned helmits wid naked soords in their hands an' shields on their arms, scrambled up the bank, an' at a sign an' a word from the chief, some laid hould av Thady an' bound him, an' others tore opin the cave an' brought out the trisure. Thin they tuk ut up an', takin' Thady wid thim, splashed into the creek again an' so to the river, an' there was

the long boat wid the dhraggin's head swayin' in the wather.

"'Death's too aisy for ye,' says the Chief av the Danes. 'A freeman's sowl ye havenut. A slave ye are an' a slave ye'll be till I've wore ye out.' An' wid that, the men that had Thady tossed him into the boat like a sack an' climbed in after him. Thin the trisure was stowed aboard an' the crimson sail hoisted an', to the chant av the pirut's song, the boat swung out an' scudded into the channel.

"But as ut wint, there kem a shrill keen av a cry from the shore that sounded above ahl the hoarse voices, the cry av a woman: 'Thady! Och Thady!'

"Fainter ut sounded, an' thin, turnin' his bruised head, Thady saw the figure av the woman that had cabled. Light as a doe, she ran along the headland, an', at the cliff's edge, she stopped an' stritched her arms to the flyin' boat.

"'Thady! Och Thady!'

"An' at the third cry, ahl the stringth av body an' sperrit stirred an' woke in Thady so that he burst the thongs that bound him as if they had been rushes. Wan av the Danes struck at him, but he twisted the spear away from the flat-faced vilyan's hand an' thrust ut into his body, drawin' ut out quick enough to break the foorce av a soord blade, that bit into his skull nivertheliss. Wanst more the lad lunged out, an' the soordsman staggered back wid a bloody throat, while the Chief, standin' by, laughed loud an' clapped his great hands. But before another cud come against him, Thady gev a lep an' was overboard an' swimmin'.

"They flung spears at him, but he dived like a seal, an' that was the last they saw av him for the wind was full in the sail, an' whin he kem up, ut was but for the gasp an' the intake an' he was under again. But ut was far to shore an' he was weak av his wound so that suddenly his stringth failed an' his sines left him; an' the next thing he knew, he was lyin' on the beach wid his head in Eva's lap, an' she weepin' wid joy an' croonin' like a mother to her babe, that he had come back to her, as she said— an' her drinched an' dhrippin' wid the wather she had pulled him from!

"'Ye shud have let me dhrown,' said Thady. 'Ye've putt the last shame on me. God forgive me! but how cud I ask forgiveness av you?'"

"'Ye're light headed,' said she. 'Be aisy, darlin', an' don't thry to talk yet. 'Tis Eva that's wid ye, pulse av me heart.'"

"'I'm black sowled,' says he. 'I'm the scum av the divil's pot. A brave man tould me I wasnut worthy av death an' he spoke the true word. Yet, livin', there's repintance, an', wid grace, there's amindment. But confession comes first an' I'll tell ye av me trayson to you an' the world an' the mother that bore me, though ye spit on me an' lave me, as ye shud. I'm not light headed.'"

"'Do ye love me?' says she.

"'As I niver loved ye before,' he says. 'To the last dhrop av me blood, O sweet voice an' tinder heart, I love ye! Mad I've been—But I'll tell ye—'

"'Tell the rest to the praist,' says Eva. 'I'll hear no harm av ye, aven from your own lips. There's no talk av shame bechune us or I'd take shame to meself that I sough ye out, wid me poor father but a day in his grave. No talk av shame or trayson, if ye love me. Only love!'"

"'Huh!'" commented the young man in the black calico shirt. "That all there was to it?"

"'Tis said they lived happy iver after," replied Mr. Mulready, fumbling for his match. "I was gev to understand that Thady wint to work like a man an' that his mother lived like a lady from that day. There's a thradition that the poor niver wint hungry from his dure, an' that the praist spoke highly av him, but there's generally somethin' in thim ould tales ut's hard to belave. Though, in coorse, 'twas after he'd lost his riches."





Home that Eva Furnished

By IDA M. EVANS

Author of "Mudpuddles," "Virginia," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

"THERE is poverty—and poverty." A really big thought, that. It is the basis of this, the strongest story Ida M. Evans has done; stronger even than her "Virginia," which first brought her fame. That fame rests not so much on the fact that Miss Evans has a facile, attractive style, as on the fact that she knows, and understands, humanity.

WHEN Eva was twelve years old she went to work, the state law to the contrary notwithstanding. Statute books are puny things compared with the availing price of potatoes and flour. Fellow-countrymen who had come over previously and acquired knowledge by acrid experience had given Eva's father on his arrival a brief course in the new land's law. In accordance with their disinterested advice, he told his eldest child that she was eight years old instead of the six she had supposed. And so the small, scared, blinking, brown-eyed girl was astutely registered when the public school immediately drew her in.

Eva didn't mind going to work when the time came. Her last teacher, Miss Colby, had been a crabbed affair, overhanging of nose, virulent of eye, with a complexion not unlike the plumage of our Thanksgiving bird, and a voice reminiscent of a spluttering trolley.

And Eva's home was not the kind it

would irk you to leave two hours earlier each day. The most intrepid of settlement workers held her nose when she climbed the sixth flight of uncleanly stairs and turned down the dirty, narrow corridor at the end of which huddled the three noisome rooms (two and a half, rather, for one was merely a windowless three-by-five oblong) where Eva's parents fed, housed and trounced their six small offspring.

The entire social settlement system warred in vain at the impregnable hostility of Eva's mother to soap and sanitation. Fat, brown-skinned, stolid, she squatted in the midst of the wretched furniture and bedding, the uncleanness of which made rich breeding-ground for all microbes known to advanced science, and shrugged her shapeless, greasy shoulders in disdainful non-desire of betterment. Scrub the floor? Eva's mother "no spik Englisch," but her haughty refusing gesture had the eloquence of seven languages. In her life

were only two vital concerns: that the soup which was the beginning and usually the end of the evening meal should be sufficiently greasy, onioned and garlic-ed to please Eva's father when he came home tired and sullen from the stockyards; and that there should be enough left, his desire gluttled, for Eva, her two small sisters and three small brothers.

The shirt and overall factory where Eva was installed had nothing on her home in the way of æsthetic charm. The ceilings were higher, and the air was a trifle less thick, though a super-critical nose might not have sniffed a difference. The dirt was perhaps less compact than in the two rooms and a half. But it seemed a nice, homelike place to Eva.

And the people who worked there were her own kind: dirty, frowsy, more intent on plenty of bread and soup than clean china. The women and the older girls hunched over the machines with the same phlegmatism that she saw in her mother's shapelessness. In their eyes was the same repressed smoldering—that curious blend of crushed homesickness for the old land, and hope, wonder and dislike of the new.

Agnes, who worked at the button machine, lived in the same tenement with Eva. Her brother worked beside Eva's father at the yards. Esther, who helped Eva lug bundles of denim from the cutting room to the machine hands, lived across the alley. Esther's mother was a scrubwoman, and frequently Eva's father, with other neighbors, had to interfere when Esther's father would express his opinion of scrubwomen's minimum wage by three-fourths murdering his wife.

Bundle-lugging was not Eva's idea of perfect bliss. It made her small arms and legs ache. But she lugged contentedly enough. Her environment had never been such as to inculcate in her small, sleek black head any foolish notion that living and bliss are afinitative. Didn't Esther also lug bundles? And Esther wasn't so sure of soup afterward. Didn't Agnes work more precariously—at a snippety-snip machine that was likely any minute to jab a finger instead of a

button? Of what, then, had Eva to complain?

Eva never thought of complaining. Life held many gay items. It was pleasant to scoot, at the first *sh-r-r* of the noon gong, down the rear stairs with Agnes and Esther, pre-empt, with brown-paper-wrapped lunch, the same table corner toward which Annie Winer and Milly Raffo were scooting, and giggle derision as the balked pair, tossing resentful braids, sought less choice quarters. It was joyous work to carry a message down to the main floor for the foreman. From the creaking freight elevator one could hurl impudent personalities through the barred doors of the various floors at half-grown boys whom the exactions of employment held back from requital.

And how Eva loved to hear the foreman "cuss" the machine girls! He had a picturesque cussing ability, that lean, flustered foreman. It sent the same jumpy thrills up and down Eva's spine as the sight of the lithographed Indian-pursued maiden in front of the nickel shows. Every happy life palpitates to one big hope. Some day Eva hoped to be allowed to spend a nickel on movies.

It was nice to scurry home at night with Esther and Agnes, through streets that were a hurrying bichrome of gray dark and twinkling yellow. Together they gaily dodged motor-trucks and big-horsed drays, all body-ache forgotten in greedy longing for soup. And pay-nights were marked by a queer, more intense joy when, with a little sheepish grin, she opened a grimy hand and her father, smiling with grim geniality, took the crumpled manila envelope. Eva did not understand the feeling of importance that over-surfed her then. No sense of personal ownership of that envelope puffed her soul. But she dimly realized that now she was more of a factor in the world's economics than when bringing home a mere report card from school.

And when her mother had ladled enough greasy soup from the iron pot to sate hunger, Eva's aching little body wriggled comfortably in a warm heap of bedclothes almost as greasy as

the soup. Hardened settlement workers shuddered at those bedclothes and wouldn't have touched them with rubber-gloved, carbolic-steeped fingers. Eva knew no better. She snuggled among them as contentedly as other luckier twelve-year olds snuggle between monogrammed sheets of purest Irish linen.

For a year and a half Fate allowed Eva comfortably to lug bundles, scurry

home and snuggle into bed. Then, deciding that she was altogether too favored in this world of work and woe, it looked about for a long, meddlesome forefinger to stir her peace into tragedy.

II

Mrs. Hubbard, a friend of a friend of the factory-owner's wife, was the



Her mother's chief concern was that the soup should be sufficiently onioned and garlic-ed to please Eva's father.

forefinger found. She was a portly, middle-aged lady, intellectual, philanthropically inclined, whose skin revolted at the touch of any but silk underwear. She liked to stroll through factories. Afterward, her own lot seemed softer, and often she got inspiration for an article for one of the many clubs to which she belonged. But finally she overshot the mark. She saw Eva.

At the time, Eva was panting under the weight of four finished bundles of overalls. Her small olive face was flushed, and under the slimsy woolen dress one could see that every muscle of her small body strained. It was Eva's custom—and the flustered, hard-pressed foreman's emphatic order—to carry only two bundles at a time. But an hour before, Esther, bumptiously ambitious, had boasted her ability to handle three. "Just as easy as not! See?" Eva saw. Straightway she took the challenge and vain-gloriously lugged four!

Mrs. Hubbard's throat tightened hurtfully as she looked at Eva—little, thin, with pathetic, oval olive face and great, wistful brown eyes. She did not know that the wistfulness of those eyes was due to a troubling desire for soup. It was nearly four o'clock, and Eva's lusty appetite made itself felt about that time of day. Ignorant of the cause, Mrs. Hubbard was painfully moved by the effect. She quivered at the sight of the puny arms strained about the four huge bundles. For once her smug complacency with her own lot was not sweetened but curdled.

Into her perturbed mind came recollection of another work-room in another friend's friend's husband's establishment: a clean, airy place in an uptown mail-order house where clean-faced, neat-dressed girls sat at long, clean tables. Mrs. Hubbard had thought that she herself wouldn't mind working in that pleasant room, high-ceilinged, with pretty, tinted walls, polished hardwood floor and excellent ventilation—that is, providing Providence had been so careless as to drop work into her life; and under the thought she had pulsed smug thanks that Providence was of a careful disposition.

So arrangements were made to transplant Eva. Experienced nursery-men say that transplanting is not a serious matter if the plant is strong enough, and the season, the weather and the new location are all right.

Mrs. Hubbard shuddered at the soup-mottled, brown woolen garment that was Eva's street, home, work, social and Sunday costume. She did not care to penetrate slumdom so far as Eva's abode—ugh! So she brought down to the factory a pretty ready-made blue serge dress, shoes, underclothing, stockings and a blue taffeta hair ribbon. Eva, though diminutive, was wholly woman. Caressingly she patted the red silk-embroidered anchors on the sleeves and the broad collar, fondly flared the blue ribbon on her sleek black braids and gave scant consideration to the change of circumstance accompanying the change of raiment. Perhaps in her small head floated the hazy notion that as the factory in a certain way out-spiced school, so the new place out-spiced the factory. Unconsciously she squared her small shoulders for bigger bundles. And her parents grunted satisfaction at the two dollars more a week.

The next Monday, Mrs. Hubbard's friend's friend's husband glanced doubtfully at her. Blandly she extended the affidavit which proved that she was nearly sixteen. So he dispatched her, in care of a tall, spectacled young man named Glenn, to the room where order slips, duplicates—all the detail memoranda of a mail-order house—were sorted. It happened to be a busy time of the year. Discipline was less boisterous than in the shirt and overall factory, but more effective. When work pressed, talk and eye-wandering were strictly taboo. So Eva's entrance was scarcely remarked. She shot an eager glance around for another Esther and Agnes; then, before she had time to be disappointed, the tall young man was initiating her into order-sorting. Her six years of schooling enabled her to follow his directions with tolerable facility—quite as much as her size led him to expect. There followed a work-engrossed week, a week of placid wonder, a week of thoughtful wonder,

At the end of the month, Eva stood on the cold brink of a pool of strange knowledge.

In the past she had mistily known that the earth held styles of living unlike that to which she was accustomed, just as she vaguely recalled that there were stone castles as well as huts in the Hungarian land which her mother spoke of with longing and her father with hate. Occasionally, on a Sunday, they had gone to the park. On the long way they passed gray and brown stone buildings, the silk and lace curtains of which hung in proud, beautiful folds. From Eva these got the same impersonal gaze that she gave the sea lions flopping for the bread which the keeper flung over the stone rim of the lagoon. Curiosities—that was all.

Settlement workers, school teachers and truant officers all displayed signs of a different plane of existence. But their lives touched Eva's only obliquely, effectually slanted off by the stolid opposition of her parents. Such people had bath-tubs, she had somehow become aware. And the night sky had stars. Neither fact was of turmoiling moment to her. And so for a while she watched her new co-workers with merely furtive wonder. They were a pitiful band, those young girls—white-cheeked for the most part, anxious not

to make mistakes, wearing clothes that to discerning eyes were sad poverty-revealers. Eva was not discerning. She could no more differentiate in degree of plenitude than a baby owl.

scooped from the dark of a tree trunk while it snoozed, could tell whether it blinked at a kerosene lamp or a sun.

Then, of a sudden, Eva plunged from the brink into the icy pool. She spluttered for breath, shivered, had a sickening desire to get back at once to the old, dirty, comfortable factory environment—and in the same moment knew sickeningly that there was no return. When her father knew so well the grim value of two extra dollars in this dollar-demanding land! There was as much likelihood of her mother returning to the hut she longed for.

Next Eva sat Leila Shafer, whose father, a tired floorwalker, needed her envelope as much as Eva's father needed hers. But Leila, slim, daintily pretty, though her lips were pink instead of red, came from a home where a white tablecloth outranked soup. Eva felt the difference. Unable to analyze it, she still cringed before it.

At the end of the table, Irene, freckled, trim, though her black skirt was shiny-seamed, grumbled mightily one noon. A barrette, birthday gift from her brother, was too green-and-white-stoned for her taste. "Does it look

cheap, Leila?" she asked anxiously, adding ungratefully: "He has no taste!"

Eva was dumfounded. All morning she had fervently admired that radiance.



Her small olive face was flushed, and under the slimsy woolen dress one could see that every muscle of her small body strained.

She had even reflected that if her father didn't know or didn't care or got killed or some other miracle happened, she might in years to come buy herself just such a beautiful scintillation. And Irene scorned it!

Another noon, Nell, who had very shabby shoes and very tired gray eyes, dropped half a sandwich to the floor. She pouted as she tossed it to a waste hamper. "I wanted it!"—disconsolately. "I'm hungry to-day."

Eva's little red tongue trembled to ask her why she didn't eat it then. The floor was clean. Didn't the porter sweep it every day? Far cleaner than the black splintered table from which Eva ate at home!

Somehow, with pain, Eva learned that there is poverty—and poverty.

She felt as though she were standing on the edge of a tenement roof. Any moment, a word or a glance from one of those pleasant, cool-poised girls might push her over. And more appalling than the girls was—Glenn, who, she had discovered, was not a man at all but a courteous boy some three years older than the affidavit made her. And, just as Eva learned that there is poverty and poverty, so she learned that there are boys—and boys.

In the past, she had regarded all young males, her brothers included, as mud-smears on the scheme of creation. Boys were things to yell at, to fight with—the ultimate end for which a girl's fingernails were fashioned.

But with Glenn's first patiently careful explanation of order-sorting, Eva's ideas of things as they are, crashed topsy-turvily. Never, never had she dreamed that a boy—or a man—could be so polite! Never had she known that masculine hands could be so dazzlingly clean and white! Ashamed, she doubled her own grubby brown fingers under the table. And his voice! So low! So courteously modulated! Mortifiedly Eva recalled the yelled persiflage of the factory. Once Glenn by chance jogged her elbow. His abstracted "Pardon me," brought to Eva the same queer sense of importance as came when she gave her wages to her father.

And slowly, painfully, out of Eva's travail, pride was born. Before she grew used to the heavy weight of the undesired offspring, its twin labored into existence—deceit.

III

Now Eva had not heretofore held truth a thing to suffer and die for. She knew the nature and value of a lie. Hadn't she said "Eight" unblinkingly when the age question was first plumped at her? But she never lied for mere pleasure—like Milly Raffo, who every month concocted a lurid tale of black-masked men trying to kidnap her and whose shamed brother had to explain to the policeman that she fibbed. And Eva despised Pierre of the news-stand, who stole bananas from the huckster and brazenly shuffled the blame to his cousin Tony.

Eva lied only when need ordered—as when on the way back with the pail of beer for her father she dallied to exchange cheerful insults with Pierre. Or when she and Agnes, finding the flap of her pay envelope insecurely sealed, had been tempted to admire its contents and a vicious dime had popped out and into a manhole. Tell her mother, who would tell her father, who would cuff her? Such devotion to truth would have been silly. Eva's mother heard that the foreman had a birthday. Since he was the incarnation of devilry, the factory sadly decided he had to have a present. Could Eva alone—pleadingly her grave brown eyes held her mother's displeased ones—of the whole room refuse to contribute? Wouldn't she be kicked out of her job? Her mother—and later her father—called all the saints to witness that the foreman ought to languish in purgatory through eternity, but they conceded that Eva couldn't help it.

Now she used that achievement as a measuring rod. Her forehead knotted achingly, as she pondered how well she could lie in a great crisis.

Avidly she listened, her sleek black head bent over the order slips, listened for many, many weeks, until she could pick a safe way among the intricacies

of hitherto unknown mentionings, such as consoles, gas-grates, German "val" and French, lisle hose, Morris chairs, salad, "Beverly of Graustark," choirs—Glenn sang tenor—water-colors, "When It's Appleblossom Time in Normandy," and sideboards. Leila's mother wore close-belted blue-and-white checked all-over aprons; Leila brought the pattern down one day for Aline to cut off. Nell's brother, who had tuberculosis, wouldn't take his egg-nogg except from a tall gold-etched goblet that Nell's great-great-grandmother had once used. Irene and her younger sister still at grammar school had a room furnished in maple. Not bird's eye; that was too costly. Irene's mother let her keep one whole dollar a week to spend as she pleased! Aline's aunt had a gray crocheted shawl that she ran to get whenever the newspaper foretold cold weather. Aline laughingly told that they tricked her once with a month-old paper and kept her wrapped two warm days.

One morning Eva made all sorts of mistakes as she listened to the gay babble over Aline's party of the night before. Presently Glenn came by with a pair of long, pale-blue gloves. He had forgotten to give them to Irene the night before. As he tossed them across the table, Eva sniffed the faint fragrance of sachet powder. Forty-nine cents at a sale, those mended blue cotton gloves had cost, and Glenn had escorted their owner home mainly because she lived in the same neighborhood as himself. Glenn's widowed mother needed his envelope and he did not scatter carfare lightly. But Eva's brown eyes glowed big, and she looked at freckled Irene with jealous, hurting respect. Then her heart thumped hard under the serge blouse. Glenn was watching her with curious intentness. Did he guess that lively blue cotton gloves were as far removed from her life as—as sea lions? Red-faced, Eva mentally berated her own dilly-dallying. Course he'd think something of the sort if she didn't hurry and tell different! Silly! Why hadn't she begun—?

But another week passed before she could manage her lump-clogged throat

and scared tongue. Finally, though, her cheeks scarlet, her heart pounding furiously, she mentioned casually—oh, very casually—that her grandmother in—in (her new-born pride turned from Hungary; she called upon her school days for aid) Texas had sent her mother a lovely crocheted white shawl.

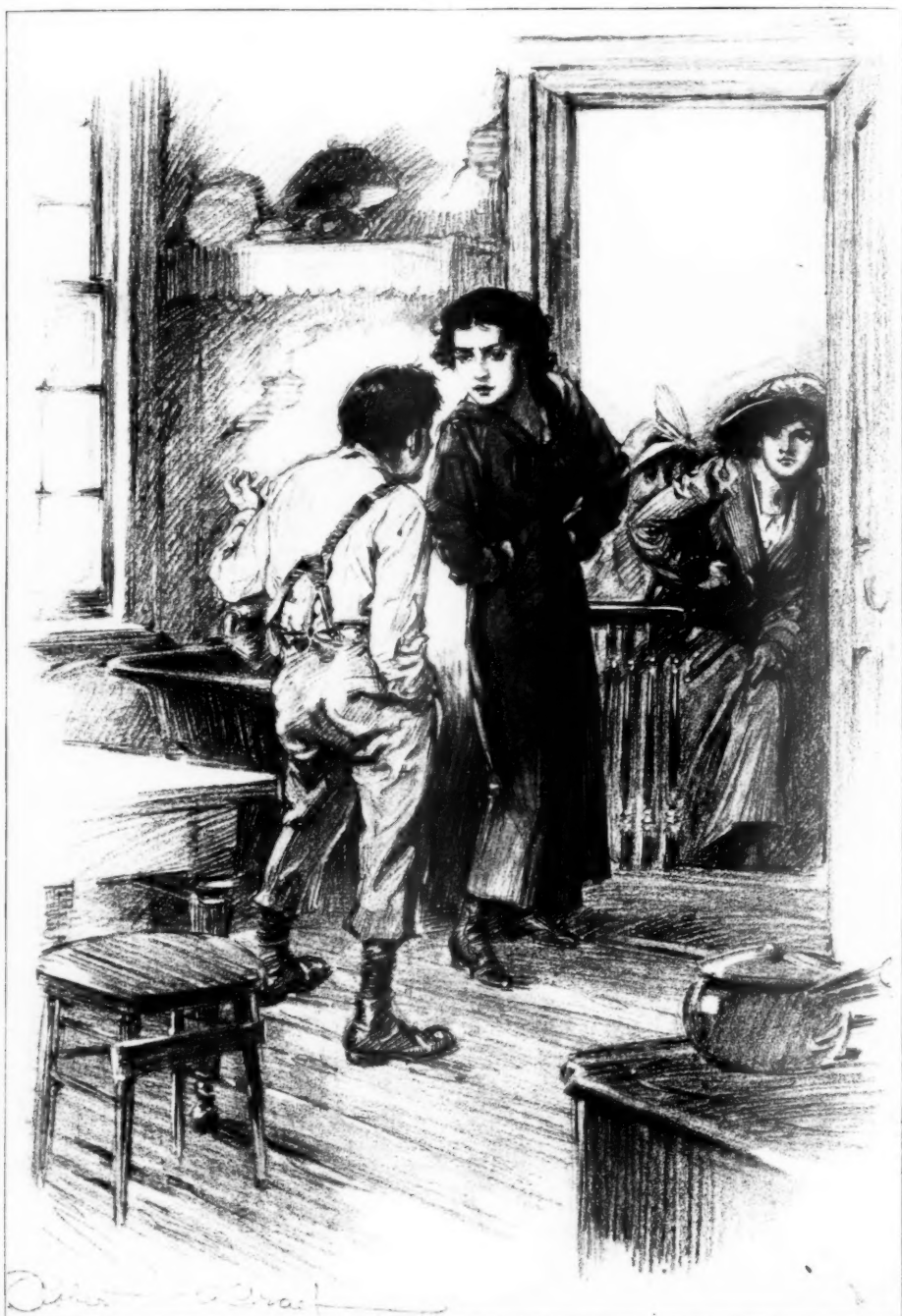
The girls smiled encouragingly. They already liked the silent little girl whose brown eyes were so inscrutable and yet appealing.

The ice broken, Eva found it easy to continue. With slow, safe strokes she painted her home in detail for the politely curious table—and Glenn. No one noticed that each detail followed a similar detail from one of themselves. And it certainly was a pleasant home when Eva had finished: Lace curtains in the parlor, ruffled Swiss in the bath-room. Eva longed—oh, mightily!—to hang rose draperies behind the lace. But she couldn't manage that audacity.

On the green Brussels rug in the sitting-room was a brown velours Morris chair. If Eva's father, surly, black bearded, repulsively unwashed, had ever heard of the pleasant, clean, bookish gentleman whom Eva fashioned out of a fast increasing vocabulary to sit in that Morris chair, he might have been amused—and he might have cuffed Eva. Beside the bookcase, was a white wicker rocker. If Eva's mother, greasy, guttural-tongued, had ever been told of the smiling, immaculate, lavender-gowned old lady with smoothly-parted white hair who rocked in that wicker chair and hummed "My Country 'Tis of Thee" while she hemmed napkins, she might have understood—and she might not.

The bookcase was elegant! Eva's father prized it even more than he did the walnut-framed picture of George Washington which hung over the mantel in the dining-room. Both picture and bookcase were heirlooms. And the books! Modestly Eva admitted that never would she have won such honors at school had it not been for the beneficence of those leather bindings! Out of the corner of a brown eye, she appraised the effect on Glenn—

"Got 'Treasure Island?' " he asked



Eva was vehemently arguing with her next oldest brother that Esther's mother did *not* start the bout by threatening to duck Esther's father in a tub of suds.

interestedly. Not without reason did Glenn have to wear spectacles.

Hastily Eva considered. Her heart beat fast when Glenn addressed her in that same tone of careless equality that the other girls enjoyed. Possession would imply familiarity with the book's contents. If she didn't have it, that dazzling gleam of interest in his eyes might fade. "My brother lost it," she confessed sorrowfully, "before I had a chance to read it!"

As the time went on, she proved that she had the germ of genius. For she never overdid, never splashed the pigment crudely, never drew the brush down hard when occasion and caution demanded an evanescent touch. For instance, she mentioned the glittering aluminum in her mother's clean pantry, but she did not enlarge on the subject. Irene, who was uncomfortably inquisitive at times, might probe her ignorance of aluminum's color. But when Aline descanted with younger-sister disgust on a brother's preference for purple socks, Eva casually raised her own eldest brother from twelve years to seventeen and made him a connoisseur in waistcoats. In assured tone, with a side glance at Glenn, she described his last purchase, a tan and green glory which the windows of Milwaukee Avenue displayed by the gorgeous dozen.

When Aline pridefully announced one morning that her sister, a stenographer, had bought, via the easy payment route, an elegant leatherette divan for the living-room, Eva listened in frowning silence. *Divan* was new. It sounded as though it might have something to do with tobacco. Eva ran no risk. She waited and watched until a week later on the way home she met her old teacher, Miss Colby.

Miss Colby seemed less crabbed. She gave the desired information kindly. And then she asked: "Is the work hard, my dear?"

Eva shook her head. "No,"—gravely—"the work isn't hard."

Miss Colby did not catch the slight accent on *work*, but she looked after the slim, blue-serged figure till it had turned into the tenement hallway, and puzzledly

declared to herself: "I never believed till now that child was as old as they claimed. That dress needs to be lengthened."

However, Eva didn't add a divan. The next morning Irene announced her intention of having a party as soon as she had saved enough dollars for refreshments. Naturally she invited Eva. Naturally Eva declined, giving the perfectly truthful reason that her parents didn't care to have her running around evenings. It was not safe.

It was plausible, and Irene, having met her own and other parents, was not amazed. But she politely persisted,—"Bring one of your brothers along!"

"Oh!" A wry smile perched on Eva's olive face. To end the matter she said: "I don't care for parties! I'd rather,"—loftily,—"*stay at home and read!*"

"Oh!" Irene was offended, as was natural. "*Very well!*" She walked away. Eva watched her with misty brown eyes. Glenn would go, of course—

It was then that Eva forlornly wearied of pretending. Truth to tell, the zest had been dwindling for quite a while. Down at work of course it was impossible not to evolve those spicy pretensions. But when she had climbed the sixth dirty flight and traversed the dirty corridor and was eating, with less gusto than in factory days, the thick soup which her mother ladled from the iron pot, there was no spice or zest—only dreariness. While she painstakingly scrubbed her face and hands at the greasy black sink, even tight-shut eyes could not aid the illusion of white porcelain and nickel-plated faucets. Sometimes her forehead knotted as she wondered how it would seem really to sleep in a maple bed on a green-matted floor, with white ruffled curtains blowing from the window. But the walk home from the mail-order house was three miles and Eva usually was so tired that the wonder soon merged into slumber. Sometimes the wonder was first touched with shame. That was when her mother, with a muttered word of tenderness, came over to see that the bedclothes were pulled high about Eva's bare little shoulders. Her mother's arm was brown

and greasy and seldom knew soap, but Eva liked to feel it against her cheek. And in the dark she reddened over that white-haired, lavender-shawled figment of her imagination.

For several days Irene's coming party was discussed to the exclusion of all other topics. Eva listened with an assumption of vast indifference, as one with a soul above frivolity, and was so absorbed in her work that she could scarcely take time to glance at the picture of Aline's aunt which Aline proudly brought down to show. Eva crossly wished they'd quit bringing down pictures of all their family to show! And she wished they'd get through talking about that tiresome party. Something in the tense wishing laid an old, tired look on Eva's young face. And then Aline, leaning lazily back in her chair to watch a sunbeam clash with Irene's brilliant barette, spoke a dozen words that drove photographs, party, wishing, pretending, everything, from Eva but hurting, strangling fear. Aline's aunt had a friend who was a settlement worker. Some Sunday, very soon, Aline was going with them on a sight-seeing tour among the poor.

"Pooh!" scoffed Irene. "Stop at our house on the way," she invited gaily. "No one could be poorer than us!"

"And while you're slumming, include me," added Leila crossly. "I'd like to see any one more poverty-stricken!" She grimaced at a scuffed shoe.

"Oh, you know what I mean," Aline said impatiently. "Of course we're all poor,"—with a tolerant glance that included Eva,—"but I mean the piggy poor! Folks that coop six or eight in two rooms and eat messy stuff out of a pot and don't know a tablecloth from an asbestos curtain. My aunt's friend says we'd *scream* if we saw some bedrooms she has seen!"

Fear closed smotheringly about Eva's pounding heart. She saw Aline gingerly picking her way up those dirty stairs, her new gray poplin skirt drawn tight from contact with the dirty walls. Aline's eyes would widen in horror. . . .

"Anybody want to go along?" chirruped Aline. "It'll be fun! Nell?"

Uninterestedly Nell shook her head.

Nell was dispirited those days. Her brother was worse. Irene had whispered.

"Do you?" Aline turned to laugh at Glenn.

"No!" Glenn spoke curtly, as though the subject were distasteful.

"Dear me, don't bite my head off," said Aline resentfully. Eva's sleek black head never raised.

Presently though, with a feverish seizing of hope, she tried to put away fear. The city held hosts of poor. It was not likely that Aline would strike that particular "piggy" nook which held Eva. And settlement workers hardly ever came on Sunday. They were too afraid of her father. For the first time Eva was in thorough harmony with her parent's barbed-wire attitude to those officious stirrers of the melting pot. What a lovely, bellowing voice her father had!

"Eva," asked Glenn suddenly, interrupting her vehement self-comforting, "where do you live?" His courteous voice was even lower-toned than usual. A discerning ear could have detected bashfulness in that lowering.

Eva was not discerning. She was frightened. Why did he want to know? Did he guess? Blindly her agonized mind clutched for an address—any address away from that black heart of the tenement district. Miss Colby's came to her. Without looking up, she gave it.

Glenn wrote it down. Then, "I'd like awfully to take you to Irene's party," he said tentatively.

Eva never looked up. No one could have guessed the mad cyclone of emotion, of twenty different emotions, that raced round and round and round in that small, sleek black head. "I'm not going," she said gravely.

"Why can't you?" coaxed Glenn. With freckled Irene, contiguity of residence might be a determining factor in gallantry. Before the grave, inscrutable charm of Eva's brown eyes, distance and time and financial considerations were not of moment. "Can't you?" he persisted with wistful earnestness.

"No,"—curtly.

Reluctantly Glenn walked away.

"Your father and mother," said Irene

coldly, "needn't be a bit afraid to allow you to go any place with Glenn! He's a perfect gentleman!"

Eva's inscrutable brown eyes became a shade more inscrutable. No one could have guessed that rosy air-castle had dropped down, down, till it stood in front of her—and then mockingly dissolved into gray, stringy cobwebs that dared her to hold them firm.



"Eva," said Glenn suddenly, "where do you live?"

"You don't know how terribly particular my folks are!" she declared importantly.

IV

Irene had her party. She treated Eva rather chillily. Eva retaliated by pretending to be much bored by the before and after discussion. She shrewdly judged that such an attitude would ward off future embarrassing invitations.

Miss Colby waylaid her one night, ostensibly to offer to lengthen and refurbish the blue serge dress, which after nearly a year of wear—it hadn't seemed so long—was too short and needed some stitching; actually she wished to learn what had given Eva that look of troubled maturity. Eva was taciturn, though: The work was easy; the place was nice. The girls were different, she admitted. This last sadly, so that Miss Colby partly understood. And in Eva's sigh and Miss Colby's virulent frown there was the same hopeless understanding of an obstinacy that was in reality a sort of stupor caused by long poverty - ground ancestry. Eva was sadly wiser than all the clever settlement workers. She knew that it would be easier to change an iron pot into a gold-etched goblet than to remold her father and mother. Too many generations of grinding in Europe's dirty mill of oppression lay behind them.

The next Sunday, Esther's father got home about five A. M. and proceeded to an experiment that he had long had in mind—into what kind and how much beef-jelly one scrawny scrubwoman could be mashed. All the neighbors within a radius of three blocks who were not totally deaf scurried to dissuade him. It was far better than a nickel show, Agnes and Eva agreed in exhilarated

concert. Esther, however, was not so well entertained.

The excitement carried over all the morning. Eva, leaning against the door opening into the corridor, was vehemently arguing with her next oldest brother that Esther's mother did *not* start the bout by threatening to duck Esther's father in a tub of suds, when steps sounded on the stairway. She turned her head carelessly, supposing that Agnes had run up to rehash the excitement.

It was Aline, with her aunt and the settlement worker! Aline, with her gray poplin skirt held gingerly tight about her. Aline, with her interested eyes dilating first with surprise and then with horror! Aline, gasping, "Eva!"

Eva shut her eyes.

Her father sprinted from the inner room and bellowed with much language embellishment that the intruders should get out, out, out! His voice came faintly to Eva, as though from a long way off.

When she opened her eyes, Aline had gone.

The next morning Eva went to work as usual. There was her father and there were the extra two dollars. Sassy young America couldn't understand the force of either item, perhaps. Back of Eva lay generations upon generations who had worked where they could and not where they would, generations who had been knouted to work and knouted away from work. And if she walked very slowly the three miles so that she was an hour late, that was because, even though one is bone-bred to knouting, every fresh generation has fresh capacity for pain.

She walked gravely into the room, gravely started on the batch of orders left uncompleted Saturday. In one encircling, inscrutable glance she saw that they knew. She sensed the quick shiver of emotion that ran around the table at her entrance. She saw the big-eyed solemnity of every face, even Nell's. Then with much firmness Eva saw nothing else all morning but the order slips on the table. If she had been able to look discerningly, if her eyes had not been knouted dull by shame, she might have seen, not the circle of solemn judges that she supposed, but a cluster of abashed

girls, aghast at the trouble Aline had knifed open, tremulously afraid to try to close it again.

Shortly before twelve o'clock Eva was summoned to the office. She went quietly, not knowing or caring why. Then in the corridor she suddenly stepped joyously. Perhaps she was going to be fired!

The manager had no intention of discharging her. He had summoned her to meet Mrs. Hubbard, who, after forgetting her for nearly a year, was desirous of knowing whether her time and trouble had been wasted.

Eva came out of the office disappointed. Glenn was in the corridor. Apparently unseeing, Eva was walking stolidly past him.

"Eva, I want to show you something!"

She stopped. No one could have guessed from her gravely inquiring eyes that her finger tips were icy cold, that her tongue clogged her throat, that her lips were dry.

Glenn drew out a small picture. Eva saw an old, wrinkled woman, a shabby old woman. In her eyes was that same smoldering gleam. Even in the photograph, her appearance told of poverty's grim victory over cleanliness.

"That was my grandmother," Glenn explained. "She lived over in"—he stammered—"in your neighborhood. And before my mother grew up, she—" He hunted for words that would be least wounding to the grave-eyed girl. "Well, she laughs now, but she didn't laugh then. Once"—grimly—"my grandmother scalded a kind woman who was distributing circulars about deodorizers." He was silent, but his eager glance entreated her to understand that he understood!

Eva looked at the picture; she looked at Glenn. Comprehension cleft the inscrutability of her eyes. Dimly she understood that between the first generation and the third must perforce lie the hard-pressed second, which cannot be fish and sometimes breaks its heart trying to be fowl. Unconsciously she squared her young shoulders that they might hold the burden of that heavily-laden link.

"And you'll let me take you to Aline's party next week?" asked Glenn.

"If she asks me,"—shyly.

"She's going to give it for you."

An Engagement with Nancy Brown

By Frank
R. Adams

NANCY BROWN.
She invited me
To spend a week or so
In town
With her papa,
Who owns a few hotels
And yachts and things
Named "Brown."
So I just came down,
But durned if I can find
In a directory in town
A millionaire whose name
Is quite the same
As Nancy Brown.

Popular Song.

ILLUSTRATED BY GRANT T. REYNARD

THIS story introduces to Red Book readers as a short-story writer, Frank R. Adams, who, with William Hough, wrote that delightful light opera, "The Time, the Place and the Girl," and several other equally successful pieces. His story won our attention because it was so far from the beaten path; and, perhaps, because it begins by making fun of the average magazine story. We believe you will find it full of that quality which makes you smile while a lump fills your throat.

THE train began to move. She stood on the rear platform waving farewells which lasted until the tunnel hid her from view.

"Then he started forward with a cry which was to echo hollowly throughout the rest of his life.

"He had forgotten to ask her name and address."

Rawdon Jones laid the magazine across his knees and looked out of the window of the parlor car with a sigh. The leading gentlemen in short stories are always such blind fools. Here was another of the usual breed, one who, through eight pages of brilliant dialogue, had tenderly rescued a beautiful stranger from a wrecked train, and then like a brainless mosquito had let her get away without asking her name or future whereabouts.

Jones reflected critically that if the story were going to be a serial the only difference would be that the remaining

chapters would be devoted to a search over the world in the most unlikely places to rectify a blunder which no man in his right senses would ever make. Well, authors have to make their living somehow, but ever put him, Rawdon Jones, in a like situation, and if he didn't know where to call the following Sunday evening and receive his proper reward, he would allow any passer-by the privilege of kicking him three times around the block.

True, there was very little chance of his being able to prove his superiority over the heroes of fiction. He spent about one-third of his life on trains, but the only wrecks he knew anything about personally had happened to fast freights just ahead at times when there was no diner on his train. And as far as beautiful girls were concerned, Jones, from wide observation, had just about come to the cynical conclusion that they never travel. He had seen women on trains, certainly, but they were invariably either

old, fat, or painted. Possibly Jones was a trifle exacting, but he had lived most of his life between the covers of best sellers, when not engaged in inspecting beef for the Bartlett-Ward Packing Company of Chicago, so he knew what a regular girl ought to look like. So do Flagg, Christy, Coles Phillips and Gibson.

Many years of lonely life in boarding houses and a naturally shy disposition had not tended to make Jones much of a mixer in feminine society. Besides, he was the type of man that women invariably pass by without a second glance. Nine out of ten men will interest, for a moment at least, any person of the opposite sex they meet, because she will ask herself how she would like being married to him. Rawdon Jones was a tenth man. They dismissed him as impossible.

Nature had not done all that she might in his case. True, she had provided him with a fine large nose, but she had fallen down on specifications for the rest of his face. His other features were of the retreating order: earnest but colorless eyes, sparse sandy hair and eyebrows, a straight line for a mouth, and a good many brilliant freckles which distracted the attention from the clear white skin which might otherwise have been an asset on the side of beauty. His body was thin without grace; he was skinny rather than slender; and his clothes, though quite expensive, usually ran to unbecoming tricks of style. He also had an undeniably individual but not particularly catholic taste in neckwear and hosiery. On this trip he had allowed his selection to fall on an atrocious shade of purple.

The fact that he indulged himself so little in the distractions of feminine society had made him all the more valuable to the Bartlett-Ward Company. He had time to attend to business, and his successive steps from office boy, weigher, city salesman, assistant inspector, to traveling inspector and buyer had been honestly earned. Romance takes less of a young man's time from business if he gets it from books than it does when studied from the original in summer dresses.

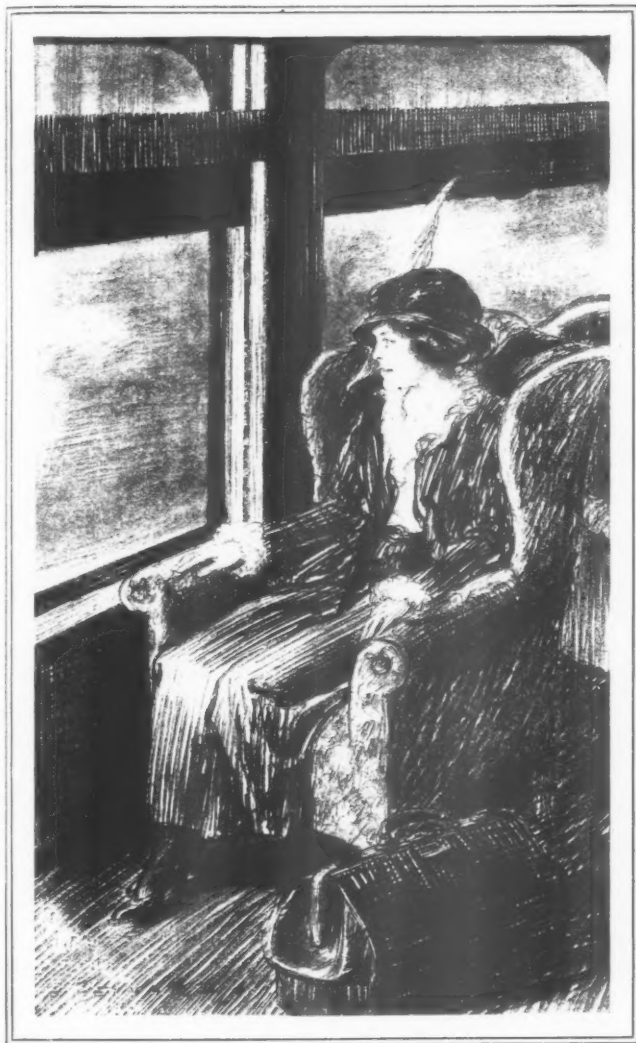
To rest his eyes, Jones turned his

chair away from the window toward the aisle of the car. Suddenly he felt an electric shock hurdle his spine. Fiction had been vindicated! Across the aisle was the one he had been looking for all his life. She must have entered the train at the last station while he had been reading. Tailored suit, small trim hat, white shirt-waist, smart shoes and gloves, no jewelry—she was everything that he demanded in a traveling heroine. Needless to say, the things enumerated were only accessories to a face and a figure which would have been the despair of Venus, who apparently knew nothing of the advantages of cold cream and corsets.

The single glance which he allowed himself sent the blood zipping through his cheeks in a blush which made the old lady in the seat next to him wonder if he were choking. There she was, right off the cover of his favorite magazine, but there also standing in the aisle between them was a wall of glass—convention. He couldn't touch her; he couldn't speak to her; if he even looked very much he would be considered rude.

The short story heroes always had some outward circumstance to help them, a wreck to escape from or a masher to chastise. Jones looked about him. A wreck was out of his power to stage manage, but a scene with a masher—? Unfortunately, there was only one very offensive man in the car. He had forfeited his right to live as soon as he got on the train, by ostentatiously donning gray silk gloves to keep his hands clean. But he seemed interested not at all in the tailored angel across the way and to pick a quarrel with him for any other reason seemed futile as well as foolish. Jones was acutely conscious that even with his discreetly padded shoulders and military heels he was a little short of brawn and height for swashbuckling. A clerical life had not given him the kind of muscles that always ripple so brazenly under the satin skin of heroes.

Maybe, Jones thought, he would be shown to a seat cross the table from her in the diner. No such luck; he would be getting off before dinner time. Heroes probably never had important engagements to inspect a thousand head of



There she was, right off the cover of his favorite magazine

cattle in Kansas City. He dared not fail to meet the company's representative who would be waiting for him at the yards. There was in his soul too wholesome a fear of old man Bartlett, whose wrath he had had to incur only once to teach him the advantage of obeying orders implicitly. Romance versus bread and butter invariably results in a decision for the latter.

get up. The old lady next to him had broken her arm and was looking at it with uncomprehending eyes. It had not begun to pain yet and she did not know why it dangled so helplessly.

Some one yelled, "Everybody out this way," and there was a wild scramble for the rear of the car. Jones was swept along with the crowd, doing the best he could to protect the old lady's arm

Jones put away his magazines in disgust. What is the use of looking at picture post-cards at the brink of the Grand Cañon? They were only twenty-five miles out of Kansas City, he discovered by consulting the passing tobacco advertisement. What could he do in the half hour before the train would pull into the station?

The car swayed slightly. There was a crash up forward somewhere, then a series of crashes in quick succession, the last as the front end of the parlor car elevated itself and plunged eagerly through the day coach ahead. Jones started to laugh—people looked so funny, the way they were sprawled out on the floor. Then he noticed that some of them were not even trying to

from further injury. There seemed to be only that one thing to do in all the world—just help an old lady out of a wrecked car. His mind was a numb, useless thing like the old lady's arm.

At last he piloted his self-imposed charge to the open air. There were a number of other passengers standing on the railway embankment at the side, and Jones helped her to join them. They all seemed more or less apathetic as yet. Soon they would recover from the shock and become frightened and voluble over the danger which was past.

The man with the silk gloves was still wearing them, although his coat was split up the back and there was a smut of soot upon his forehead.

A hundred feet away they were carrying out a man in a blue uniform.

"That's our brakeman," the silk gloved individual said. "Poor devil, he was on the platform when she tele-scoped."

A wisp of curly blue smoke drifted out of one of the windows of the parlor car.

"Our car is on fire," the man added with a little show of emotion. "I'm glad I got out in time."

"Do you suppose there is anyone left in there—in the car?" the old lady asked.

"Oh, I guess not." Silk Gloves had just discovered the tear in his coat and the minor calamity sank into insignificance. "It would be tough luck, though, to be stuck in there."

"We'd better go back and look." Jones' book training prompted him with the right speech.

The other looked at him incredulously. "Go back into that car when it's on fire? You're crazy."

"I'm going to."

"Go ahead. I'll hold your coat."

The callous contempt of this impossible individual stung Jones into a heroism he almost wished he hadn't thought of. Maybe that girl would see him. Where was she anyway? He looked around the group of passengers. No heroine. His pulse quickened with a combination of exultation and apprehension. If she were in the car and he could save her life it would be as good

as an introduction anyway. Thus even heroes have ulterior motives.

He entered the burning car resolutely. As yet there was a good deal more smoke than flame. He groped his way from chair to chair, crouching low to get as pure air as possible. Once his foot struck something yielding and he drew back with a startled cry. When he stooped he discovered that it was an abandoned suit-case. While he stood there he heard a faint groan somewhere ahead of him.

"Help is coming," he shouted and kicked the suit-case aside. "Where are you?"

"Here," said a faint voice, "on the floor about the middle of the car."

"Are you badly hurt?" he inquired, more to keep her talking than anything else.

"I don't know. Something has fallen on my foot and I can't move it."

He reached her side at last. It was the girl. A parlor car chair had broken off from its iron support and dropped across her ankle, jamming itself between the next seat and the wall.

"We'll get you out of here in a jiffy."

Jones took a deep breath near the floor to avoid the smoke and began to lift up the chair. "If your ankle isn't broken this won't damage you a bit."

By putting his whole weight against it he was able to move the chair a little. "Now draw your foot out if you can use the muscles of your leg. If you can't, just roll over."

The girl was whimpering from the pain that shot through her ankle when the pressure was removed but she nodded that she understood, and finally rolled over enough to get out of the way.

"My ankle is broken, I think," she decided in business-like fashion.

"All right; I'll carry you out."

She surveyed him critically. "You're not any bigger than I am," she objected.

"I can lift you all right." He would have carried her then if it had been his last official act on earth.

Picking her up was the hard part. It was almost beyond his strength to lift her inert body from the floor. But it was

a proud burden and Jones in his soul was a giant, so he gathered her eminently desirable self into arms painfully unaccustomed to such lovely contents.

Then as he straightened up there was a muffled crash, a crackling of glass and a snapping of iron. The roof apparently dropped and the floor twisted under his feet. Something struck him in the back and he was hurled to the floor, landing, however, in such a position as to protect the girl at the expense of his own meagerly padded bones.

An involuntary cry escaped him.

"Oh, you're hurt," she exclaimed.

"A mere scratch." That was what they always said in books. Jones was proud of himself for remembering it in time.

"What do you suppose happened?" the girl asked as they scrambled to their knees.

"Another train ran into us from the rear," he explained briefly. "Our brakeman was killed and I guess no one else went back with a flag to stop the next train following."

The fire began to take hold in earnest now. The crackling flames grew more angry.

"We've got to get out of here," he said cheerfully, wondering whether that place where he had been struck in the back was on fire or not. It felt that way, a stinging, burning pain.

But danger anaesthetized his present pain, and the spirit of adventure stimulated him to impossible strength. Two train wrecks and a fire inside of twenty minutes! *D'Artagnan* himself had lived no faster than that.

It was because the mind of a hero captained the body of a cattle inspector that he was able to drag the girl free from the debris and across the floor to a window where the smoke was pouring out through a jagged vent in the glass.

"Breathe very little," he cautioned as he abandoned her for a moment and broke out the rest of the glass from the window with his elbow.

"I may have to drop you on the other side," he told her hoarsely.

"All right. I guess I can stand it. It's better than dying in here."

"You bet."

He bent down quickly, and gathering her skirts around her with one arm, put the other under her shoulders and painfully elevated her to the window sill. There was a moment of hesitation while he tried to decide which end to put through first.

"Feet first," she prompted, reading his mind. "Even with my broken ankle it is better than landing on my head."

Fortunately it was not necessary to drop her. Some one had seen them through the smoke at the window and a dozen arms were waiting to receive her when he managed to get her through the sash.

When he was relieved of the responsibility, the spirit of the *Musketeers* abandoned him and he collapsed.

But something tormented his mind and would not let him remain unconscious, an *idée fixe*, a phobia, that brought him to his senses in spite of the alluring languor which dragged him back to oblivion. He opened his eyes. The sky was above him; under his head was something, obviously not a pillow, which kept his neck at a comfortable angle. He decided that it must be some one's coat rolled up. For a moment he lay wondering what it was that he had waked up for—what the something might be which he had forgotten but which it was important to do. Was it to meet a thousand head of cattle in Kansas City? No—that was important but he couldn't do it anyway, and for once old man Bartlett would have to accept his excuse for a duty unperformed. It was something else.

Then he knew. He had forgotten to ask that girl what her name was!

He turned his head wearily to one side with a muttered "Damn!"

"Are you feeling better?" some one asked from the other side of him.

He turned his head to look before he allowed his heart to do the high jump as it threatened. "Opportunity knocks but once" was proved to be wrong. She was sitting on the grass not far from him, and a man in his shirt-sleeves was about to put a bandage around her ankle.

"Sure. I'm feeling better," Jones replied. "I have been for thirty seconds."

There was a wrecking crew at work clearing the track, and several surgeons here and there were patching up the damaged human machinery. Demolition and reconstruction are Siamese twins in the United States, so closely do they follow one another.

Jones attempted to turn over on his side so that he could face the girl, but there didn't seem to be any connection between the idea of turning and the muscles which he expected to carry out the work. It was a curious sensation, and it had a terrifying aftermath, when he wondered if that was to be his condition throughout the rest of his life. Dismissing that as impossible, he let his mind return to the adventure in hand.

"How is your ankle?" he inquired sympathetically.

"It's only sprained, the surgeon says. I guess I'm mighty lucky. I don't know how I can thank you for getting me out of that car."

"That's all right. I can't take any credit for it because it happened that I had seen you before. Gee, any fellow who had ever looked at you—" He paused clumsily.

"You had seen me before?" she repeated with a puzzled expression, overlooking his unpracticed compliment. "Where?"

"Can't you remember?"

She studied his face, trying to place it. It was an honest countenance, she reflected, and you would trust the man behind it, but it lacked cleverness. He was obviously not one of her social acquaintances. Probably he had been a house servant or a gardener for her father at some time or other and she had forgotten him.

"Oh," she said, voicing that idea. "did you ever work for John Bartlett?"

"Yes," he answered in flattered surprise, "I do work for him now, out at

the yards. I'm an inspector in the buying department. Did you ever work out there? I never saw you in the general office, so I suppose you must have been one of his private stenographers."

The fact that he had answered his own question kept her from denying that he had guessed her identity. Any man who would take her for a stenographer was lacking in discernment and did not deserve the truth. Of course she did not know much about how a stenographer looked and acted but she felt sure that she was different. She overlooked the fact that in these days there are stenographers and stenographers, and that John Bartlett's taste in that particular line was known to be exceptional. You could fill a musical comedy chorus any day from the correspondence department of Bartlett-Ward's Chicago office.

"The first time I ever saw you was to-day," he went on. "I sat right across



"My ankle is broken, I think," she declared.

from you in the parlor car. Don't you remember?"

"I'm afraid I didn't notice." That was tactless on the girl's part. She might have let him think that he had been at least a pin-point on her horizon. She would have, if he had looked the least little bit like a college freshman, but she was not accustomed to considering the feelings of beef inspectors.

"I don't suppose you would. I had my back turned most of the time." This was not so much by way of explanation to her as it was a sop to his own self-respect. "I was facing the window and reading a magazine story about a railroad wreck."

"That was funny."

"Yes, wasn't it? There was a fellow in the story who pulled a girl out of the mess and fell in love with her." A sudden twinge in his back made his speech a trifle jerky but he concealed it as well as he could. "The poor goat in the story, though, forgot to ask the girl's name and address—so he never found her to tell her about it. Mostly always the heroes in stories like that forget to ask the girl's name. I forgot to ask yours—did you notice? I was going to after we got out of the car but I fainted before I got a chance."

The young woman smiled at the utter ingenuousness of her rescuer. The people she knew were more adroit. She saw whither Jones' remarks were tending and sought desperately to shift the subject.

"I was terribly afraid that you were seriously hurt. You're not, are you?"

"Gee, no. I hardly feel any pain now."

He did not tell her about the general paralysis of his muscles.

"I haven't any more idea than a rabbit who you are," he pursued relentlessly. "I guess you don't know who I am either. I'm Rawdon Jones, representing, as you know, the Bartlett-Ward Company of Chicago, the greatest beef packers in the world."

"By the way," she broke in, "there was an old lady with a broken arm who wanted me to thank you for helping her get out of the car. She went away as soon as they dressed her arm. Her son heard about the wreck and came out for her from Kansas City."

Two surgeons from the relief train, having finished rendering first aid to the women passengers, now approached Jones.

"Where are you hurt?" one of them asked.

"I don't hurt much anywhere, Doc'. There's a burning sensation right in the middle of my back and I can't move my muscles—that's all."

"I should think that might be almost enough," commented the other and younger man, apparently an assistant.

A large automobile drew up in the road near by and presently a couple of men came for the girl with a stretcher. Jones was so interested that he paid little attention to the examination which the surgeons were making of his back.

"I'm going now, Mr. Jones, so if I should never see you again I'll tell you good-by."

"You'll see me again all right," he returned heartily. "If you'll just give me your name and address I'll call some time next week."

She hesitated a moment, her eyes lingering in distress on his honest but rabbit-like features.

He went on, "We'll show these magazine writers how it would really happen to a couple of wide-awake people."

"My name," said the girl, blushing and faltering a little, "my name is Nancy Brown and I live at, 1560 East Sixty-third Street."

"Chicago?"

"Yes."

"Nancy Brown," he repeated delightedly, "1560 East Sixty-third Street. Do you mind if I call there a week from next Sunday, Miss Brown?"

"Not in the least." She dropped her eyes when she discovered the younger of the two surgeons regarding her with a questioning gaze. "Now good-by."

"Good-by, Miss Brown, good-by."

After she was gone the older surgeon asked with fatherly kindness, "You're not married, are you?"

"No."

"Mother and father living?"

"No. Why?"

"You're going to be laid up for quite awhile. I wondered if there was anybody you wanted to notify."

Jones regarded the grave face of the surgeon keenly. "Is it as bad as that?" he asked finally.

"Yes, it's as bad as that. You've only got an even chance if we operate right now. The injury itself wouldn't have been so bad if you hadn't put the strain on the muscles afterward, helping rescue other people from the car."

"That's all right, Doc'. You'd have done the same thing yourself."

"You understand that we have to work

Brown, 1560 East Sixty-third Street."

The surgeon duly wrote it down on a prescription blank and tucked the memorandum in his pocket.

"Thanks. Now slip me the balloon juice."

While Jones was dropping down interminably through endless though pleasant clouds of feathers, a man in chauffeur's uniform came to the place where the girl had been and picked up her coat, which had been left behind.



"Opportunity knocks but once," was proved to be wrong. She was sitting not far from him and a man in his shirt-sleeves was about to put a bandage around her ankle.

under very unfavorable circumstances here outside, but I don't dare wait."

"That's all right. There aint anybody to worry. I'm ready any time you are."

The younger man held a rubber cone out to him and directed him to breathe naturally from it.

Jones turned his head to one side for a moment.

"Say, Doc', will you put down that address for me? When I come out from the gas I might not remember it. Nancy

"One moment," commanded the younger surgeon. "Whose coat is that?"

"It belongs to the young lady who hurt her ankle," replied the chauffeur respectfully.

"I know, but what is her name?"

"Oh, her name is Miss Grace Bartlett."

"Daughter of John Bartlett of the Bartlett-Ward Packing Company?"

"Yes."

"I thought I had seen her picture in

the papers. Thank you. You may take the coat."

After half an hour the older surgeon shook his head with a sigh and left his assistant in charge of Rawdon Jones, sometimes of Chicago but more often of the Kingdom of Zenda.

The effects of the ether wore off after a little and Jones opened his eyes.

"Hello, Doc'," he greeted the surgeon feebly. "You haven't lost that address, have you?"

"No, here it is: 'Nancy Brown, 1560 East Sixty-third Street.'"

"That's it, and I've got a date to call there a week from Sunday, haven't I?"

"Yes, but I'm afraid you can't keep it."

"Why?" Jones whispered. He studied the young surgeon's face for a moment. The surgeon did not evade him. "You mean I aint going to get well?"

The surgeon nodded.

Jones thought in silence for a long while.

"All right," he murmured finally. "I might never have had the nerve to propose to her anyway. Say, Doc', will you write a note to her, to Nancy Brown, before a week from Sunday, and tell her why I couldn't come?"

"Sure."

"Thanks."

With a sigh the young man closed his eyes, and slowly and silently drifted with the tide out upon the bright sea of adventure.

SHORT stories by Edwin Balmer, Arthur B. Reeve, Kennett Harris, Ida M. Evans, Reginald Wright Kauffman, Frederick R. Bechdolt, Clifford S. Raymond; a new "Pembina" story by Walter Jones; Curwood's new novel; the serials by Elinor Glyn and the Chesters—that's just a bird's-eye view of the June Red Book. Unusual, gripping stories, every one of them, all selected with an eye to meeting the languor that will be in the air by then.

THE JUNE RED BOOK WILL ABOUND
WITH THE SORT OF STORIES YOU
CAN'T FIND IN ANY OTHER MAGAZINE

For the Love of Mike

A "GUARANTEED LAUGH" STORY
OF A GROUP OF CIRCUS "FREAKS"

By Ellis Parker Butler

Author of "Pigs is Pigs," "Philo Gubb," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY REA IRVIN



THE Great Monster Combined Shows pulled into Riverbank in two long sections, running on number Seventeen's schedule, with the Freak Car bringing up the rear of the first section, and the private car of the great Signor Michael Angelo Popetti serving as the penultimate. The bunk cars of the other performers were tagged onto the second section, and these, with the Freak Car and Signor Popetti's car, were switched onto the siding alongside the Riverbank Sash and Door Factory in the cool blue dawn. Here, between the brick building of the sash and door factory and the sweetly pine scented lumber piles, the occupants of the cars were permitted to continue their slumbers while the animal cars were being unloaded on the flour-mill spur.

At the last stop of the show an intruder had forced himself into the Freak Car intent on revenge. This was a plump individual clad in a boy's size Roman tunic, and he had once acted the title rôle in Signor Popetti's Gigantic Ballet and Spectacle, presented at a cost of fifty

thousand dollars, unequalled in the world's history, entitled, "Nero, or the Destruction of Rome."

While acting the rôle of the infamous *Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus Nero Claudine Caesar Drusus Germanicus*, who fiddled while Rome burned and the five hundred—count them—five hundred ballet-skirted girls danced, this individual had fallen in love with the superb hair and placid features of the Circassian Girl, who took part as a captive in the Triumph of Nero.

Unfortunately, Signor Mike Popetti also loved the Circassian Girl, and when Nero—or Mr. Lucy of Rome, as the freaks dubbed him for short—had expressed his love in a chaste "Ah, there!" Mike Popetti had discharged him. As the ghost of Nero he had boarded the train to haunt Signor Popetti and in this he had had the assistance of the freaks, but the haunting had been a rank failure. Signor Popetti had thought the vision was a dream, and its only result had been that the green light of a lantern on Mr. Lucy's legs had given him the idea for a greater spectacle, to be

known as "The Inferno of Dante or Heaven, Purgatory and Hell."

In the ladies' end of the car Princess Zozo, the snake charmer, was the first to awaken. Orlando, her favorite python, who had had indigestion since he swallowed the leather chair cushion at Dayton and was subject to nightmare, slept with Princess Zozo in a bunk with a wire screen, and he was restless. The unaccustomed odor of fresh pine lumber irritated his delicate nose and he began moving up and down the bunk, rubbing his nose against the car window and, at each turn, snapping his tail angrily like the lash of a whip. Princess Zozo might have slept through this had Orlando not whipped her in the face with his tail at each turn, but the cutting blows awakened her.

"Stop, it Orlando!" she said. "Lie still and be a good boy and let your mommys sleep."

But Orlando would not lie still. Princess Zozo raised her head and looked out of the window and saw that the car had reached its destination. Not for a great deal would she have raised the wire netting while the car was on the road, for Orlando might then have wandered to the platform and have been lost, but she knew the intelligent reptile, even if he strayed a few hundred feet from the car, would return at her call. Not infrequently she allowed him to glide out of her bunk in the morning. He liked to glide around the car and hunt cold cream jars, for there was nothing he liked as well as cold cream. It was to him what marshmallows are to school-girls, and when he could not find any of the jars in the car open so he could stick his nose in them, he often coiled up on the car floor beside a wardrobe trunk and remained there motionless and content with his nose close to the lid, breathing in the odor of cold cream as it issued from the trunk. Even when most restless this quieted him.

Knowing this, Princess Zozo opened the wire net front of her bunk.

"Don't go far, sweetness," she said as Orlando glided to the floor, and she turned over and went to sleep again.

"What is it?" asked the Circassian Girl from the opposite bunk, raising her perfectly hairless head, but Princess Zozo was already asleep and the Circassian Girl, seeing Orlando's tail slide to the floor, guessed that the python had been restless, and she too went to sleep again, and the car was silent except for the snoring of Syrilla, the fat lady, Mr. Loneragan, the living skeleton, and Mr. Hoxie, the strong man.

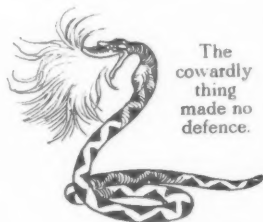
Maggie—which was the non-professional name of the Circassian Girl—never slept in her hair. It was one of the finest heads of hair ever manufactured in America, each golden yellow hair standing straight so that the whole looked like the pappus of a dandelion

gone to seed, but glowingly golden. To sleep in it would have been to ruin it, so Maggie always put it in a large hand-box in her wardrobe trunk. This night, however, she had the hair in her bunk, and the reason for this was that Mr. Lucy—who loved her to distraction—

had not so much as recognized her the night before when he saw her kimonoed and hairless. It is little use having a passionate lover if he cannot recognize his beloved, and Maggie had planned to greet Mr. Lucy in the morning fully behaved and radiant.

Orlando, however, wandered the floor of the car uneasily. The odor of fresh pine killed the less obtrusive odor of cold cream and even the wardrobe trunks gave him no solace. He peered in at the sleeping Syrilla, who snored with a sound like "Ug-gug-gug—foo—oo!" and turned away. Near at hand stood the Circassian Girl's wardrobe trunk, carelessly left ajar. Orlando raised his head and examined it. Even his hearty appetite hesitated at the spangled red dress Maggie wore when on the platform.

He turned away from this also, and looked into Maggie's bunk. Like some



golden yellow porcupine, every quill erect, Maggie's wig lay at her feet on the red woolen blanket. Orlando swayed his head from side to side angrily. How dared this intruder venture into his car? He darted his bifid tongue at the wig and his small eyes glistened with hatred. He drew back his head and darted it at the wig to see if the brazen creature would run. It did not run. But as his nose drew near the wig Orlando whiffed the odor of cold cream that clung to it. Although the family and genus of this golden yellow porcupine were unknown to him its odor suggested that it was edible and he was willing to take a chance. His mouth opened; his head darted at the wig; the cowardly thing made no defence, and in three gulps he swallowed it. After the Dayton chair cushion, a mere wig was nothing to gag over. Content, now, he glided back to Princess Zozo's bunk and coiled himself placidly in the crook of her arm and went to sleep.

An hour or so later the Circassian Girl opened her eyes. For a moment she gazed at the bottom of the bunk above her, dreamily content.

"Aint it grand," she said to herself happily, "to be loved by two gents at once? Aint it lovely to have two such gents as Mr. Lucy and Signor Popetti a-scrappin' for you? Gee! And to think my wig done it! Believe me, if I don't wear that wig every minute of the day! Male hearts is so fickle a girl hadn't ought to take no chances."

She raised herself and looked for the wig. It was gone! She looked on the floor of the car. It was not there. She was sure she had put the wig in the bunk, but she slipped out of the bunk and looked in her wardrobe trunk. The band-box was empty.

"Syrilla!" she said, for the fat lady was the refuge of all the lady freaks in time of trouble.

"Ug—foo—oo! Oh! What is it? What is it?" asked Syrilla, awakening suddenly. "My gracious, dearie, how you scared me! I was dreaming the car was afire and that Mr. Lonergan was tryin' to rescue me. I was just dreamin' he had got his sleepin' tube under me and was tryin' to roll me out of the car with

it for a roller. And I mashed it flat."

Mr. Lonergan was the living skeleton and so bony and brittle that he always slept in a hollow steel tube as a precaution against accidents. As the tube was guaranteed to withstand a pressure of two thousand pounds per square inch, Syrilla must have dreamed that she had grown considerably fatter than she actually was. Although, to the casual eye, she may have seemed to weigh a full ton, she was considerably less weighty than that.

"I'm so sorry, dearie!" said Maggie. "You'll excuse me, wont you? My wig is disappeared."

"Zozo!" exclaimed Syrilla.

"What dja mean, Zozo?" asked Maggie.

"Bend down, dearie," said Syrilla from the depths of her bunk. "Far be it from me to accuse any lady freak of mean tricks, but could I help noticing the glances of fondness Princess Zozo cast upon that handsome stranger last night? Believe me, Maggie, she was quite stuck on him from the first glimpse."

This was true. Princess Zozo was as deeply in love with Mr. Lucy of Rome as Mr. Lucy was in love with Maggie. The revelation quite overcame Maggie.

"Quit kiddin' me, Syrilla!" she said. "You don't mean that Zozo would be mean enough to—"

"Stand out of the way, dearie, till I roll out of my bunk," said Syrilla, "and I'll explain."

On account of Syrilla's weight and bulk she had a bunk built flat on the floor of the car, and in "getting out of bed" she rolled over and over out of the bunk onto the floor of the car. She now did this and, having dragged herself to her feet by grasping the adjacent curtains, she led the way to the ladies' wash room at the end of the car. By squeezing herself into the corner by the hand basin Maggie was able to enter the room at the same time as Syrilla, and they closed the door.

"I do hope I aint falling off in flesh," said Syrilla. "This is the first time anybody ever was able to get into this room at the same time with me."

"I'm sort of drawing myself in," said

Maggie comfortingly. "You've no need to worry, dearie. I never saw you look fatter."

"One reason I like you is because you always say such pleasant words," said Syrilla, smiling contentedly. "Maybe you just do it to josh me, but I'm as fond of being joshed as a thinner party is. A fat has as much feelin' as a thin, dearie. But I was goin' to tell you about Zozo."

"Yes, do," said Maggie.

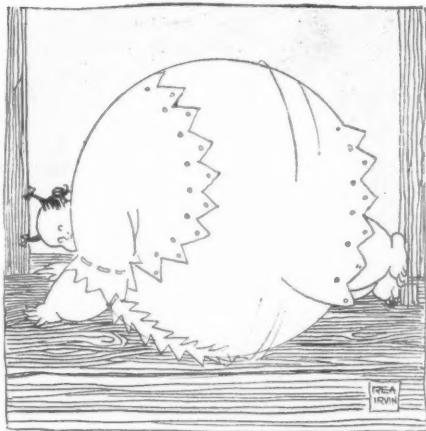
"Take it from me, dearie," said Syrilla, "that woman is a cat and aint to be trusted. It's like Shakespeare says, she'll smile and smile and sting you just the same. I'd wager a pound of flesh—if I had it to spare—that she's got your wig right now. Yes I would! You should have seen the eyes she made at that gen'lem'n last night. And what do you think?"

"What?" asked Maggie.

"I dreamed last night that a snake was swallerin' a billiard ball."

"Well?"

"You say 'Well?' dearie, like you thought there was nothin' in it, but I didn't sit on a platform at Huber's Dime for three years right next to Solanzo, the Seventh Son of a Seventh Son, for nothin'. You can take it from me that many was the interestin' chat I had with him about dreams, and there's more in them than most folks thinks. I've got the psychology into me to be a grand dreamist, as Solanzo told me many a time, if I wasn't fited by kind nature to be a fat. When I was a thin young girl I dreamed once of stringin' beads on a thread, and it wasn't no time at all until I begun gettin' double chins, one after another, like beads on a chain. What would a snake stand for but a



"Stand out of the way, dearie."

snake-charmer, honey? And what would a billiard ball stand for but you, the way you look without your wig? In my dream I almost spoke right out and tried to warn you. Take my word, Zozo was makin' away with your wig right then."

"The cat!" said Maggie. "I'll show her!"

"If I was you I would pause and wait before

I did anything rash," said Syrilla. "If you go and raise a row, a woman like her would be quick enough to tell your gen'lem'n admirer that you was kickin' up a fuss because you lost your hair. She'd be glad of an excuse to tell him. 'My land!' she'd say, 'don't any of you girls know where Mag's hair is? She can't go in the tent unless she finds her wig.' And of course a nice gen'lem'n like him would make inquiries and find out what he was in love with was only a head of hair from Burgheimer & Gross, on Sixth Avenue. What you got to do is to play sick today and stay in your bunk, and when we go up to the grounds you can hunt through the car and find where your woman's crown of glory is hid."

"Maybe she threw it out of the car window," suggested Maggie.

"Not her," said Syrilla. "She'd keep it to show to your gen'lem'n admirer, dearie, to clinch the fact how bald you was. She thinks you'll raise a fuss, and then she'll wait until he's in the car and say, 'Oh, is it your hair you lost, Maggie? Here it is!' You can't believe what cats some women is, can you?"

"It aint hardly possible to believe it, is it?" said Maggie. "How'm I goin' to get out of this room, Syrilla?"

"Just sort of squeeze into me, dearie," said Syrilla. "I'm quite yieldin', like a

jelly fish, when you know it. Only squeeze easy—I bruise so easy.”

The Circassian Girl squeezed into Syrilla and out of the door and hastily sought her bunk, but Princess Zozo was already awake.

“What’s the matter, dearie?” she asked as she saw Maggie climb back into her bunk.

“I’m off my feed to-day, sweetheart,” said Maggie. “Tell Higgins I’ll have to be excused from the platform to-day, will you? My head is almost burstin’ with pain.”

“You poor dear!” said Zozo sympathetically. “You’d ought to have got your hair a size larger. Tight hair causes more headaches than admirin’ men has any idea of.”

The words, while meant in all kindness, only confirmed the distrust Syrilla had aroused, and Maggie turned her face to the car wall without another word.

In a few minutes all the other occupants of the car, male and female, were awake and busily dressing. Mr. Loneragan wiggled out of his steel sleeping tube; General Thumb donned his diminutive uniform; Major Ching put on his enormous garments; Hoxie put on his tights and his street clothes over them; and the tattooed man covered up his illustrated skin with ordinary street wear.

Mr. Lucy of Rome alone sat on the edge of his bunk, uncertain what to do. He had entered the car at Millidgeville clad only in a boy’s size tunic, which was so short it did not reach to his knees and so straight it would not button all the way up in the back, and he was confronted with a serious situation. In the impetuosity of his desire for revenge on Popetti he had thought only of the present. He had entered the car in the dark, and it was now daylight, and the bright but scanty tunic was no garment in which to venture on the streets. He might have borrowed clothes from some of the men, but those of the giant, the dwarf and Mr. Loneragan were not of suitable dimensions, and Mr. Hoxie and the Tattooed man had but one suit apiece. Even had they had two apiece it would have taken one from each,

made over into one, to cover Mr. Lucy’s plump body. He was a large man.

“I’m a fool!” said Mr. Lucy with emotion.

“Most men are,” said General Thumb. “What’s the matter?”

“No clothes but this infernal tunic,” said Mr. Lucy sadly. “I can’t wear this outdoors, you know. I’d be mobbed.”

“You’d be arrested, anyway,” said Mr. Loneragan. “Lucy, you’ll have to stay in the car, here.”

“And starve!” said Mr. Lucy. “Starve! It don’t take much starving to starve a plump man, you know.”

“We fetchee plenty eat,” said Major Ching.

“Yes,” said Mr. Lucy. “I’m to stay here and starve while Popetti has a chance to court the darling of my heart. I’m to sit here on the edge of this bunk and wait for a ham-sandwich while Popetti presses forward to the goal of happiness! Face to face with my golden-haired darling, Popetti will complete his conquest while I sit here inert and read day before yesterday’s newspaper and gnaw my heart out for jealousy. This is a cruel, cruel world!”

“I could buy you a suit up-town and send it down to you if you gave me the price,” said Mr. Loneragan.

“Price!” exclaimed Mr. Lucy. “Do you speak of price to a man in love? To a man raving wild with love? Where would I have the price? Do you think a tunic is a pair of pants, Mr. Loneragan? Do you think a measly little boy’s-size tunic is all plastered up with pockets? Where do you think I would have a place to carry money in a tunic like that?”

He threw the garment at Mr. Loneragan.

“How did the ancient Romans carry money?” asked Mr. Loneragan.

Mr. Lucy, in his borrowed bathrobe, stood up and drew himself up proudly.

“The kind of Roman I represent, Mr. Loneragan,” he said proudly, “is an imperial Roman. I have never, in this or any other show, represented any kind of Roman but imperial Romans. I represented *Lucius Domitius Ahenobarb—*”

“Yes, yes, you needn’t go through it all,” said Mr. Loneragan hastily.

"—*barbus Nero Claudius Cæsar Drusus Germanicus*, Emperor of Rome," said Mr. Lucy, "and emperors of Rome, Mr. Loneragan, did not have pockets. They were followed about the streets by a purse bearer, who disbursed money with a free hand at the Emperor's slightest whim."

"If that's the way you feel about it," said Mr. Loneragan, offended by Mr. Lucy's haughty tone, "you ought to have brought your purse-bearer along when you came a-ghosting. I'm not going to plug around through a water-tank town trying to find an imperial purse-bearer looking for a job. They don't hang out in these bush-league towns, Mr. Lucy, sir. My idea is that a man, in this present day and generation, is effete and effeminate if he isn't able to carry his own purse—unless he's married. Then his wife carries it."

"I am willing and anxious to have a wife to be my purse bearer, as you know," said Mr. Lucy, and he said it in such a subdued and saddened tone that Mr. Loneragan forgot his anger.

"That's all right, old scout," he said. "But until you can earn some money to buy a suit, I don't see what we can do for you."

"And how can I earn money in this car, I'd like to know," said Mr. Lucy. "How can I, when I am tied up here in a miserable sawed-off, open-in-the-back tunic, earn money?"

"Why—why—lots of ways," said Mr. Loneragan. "There are lots of things a shut-in can do to earn money. You can—you can sew carpet rags. You—you can embroider doilies. Did you ever embroider doilies?"

"No," said Mr. Lucy.

"He might dress dolls," said General Thumb. "He might dress dolls in Roman costumes—in tunics. That would be easy. He'd have his own tunic for a model. They ought to sell like hot cakes. Roman dolls, you know. Only—"

"Only what?" asked Mr. Loneragan.

"Only he hasn't any dolls," said General Thumb.

The men were silent for a while, thinking deeply.

"Can you knit?" asked Mr. Hoxie suddenly.

"No," said Mr. Lucy, and silence fell again. When it was broken it was by Major Ching, whose English was as broken as the silence it shattered.

"Plenty Chinaman no leggee," he said. "No can walkee. Whillil."

"What?" asked Mr. Loneragan.

"Whillil," repeated Major Ching. "Whil-lil. Whil-lil 'tickee. Mlister Lucy whil-lil 'tickee."

"I don't know what it is," said Mr. Lucy, "but I'll be blamed if I'm going to whil-lil 'tickee like a legless Chink. To have been Emperor of Rome in a first-class show and then come down to whilliling 'tickee, when you don't know what it means, is too much of a drop."

"Whillil 'tickee," insisted Major Ching, pointing to the many huge lumber piles to be seen through the car window. "Whillil plitty things with knifee."

"Whittle!" exclaimed General Thumb. "Whittle sticks! Chains, you know, with balls inside the links, and fan sticks, and things! Just the thing! Look at the lumber right here. And we can sell them for him. Circus crowds will buy anything. I'll lend him my knife."

"And I'll go out and steal a board," said Mr. Hoxie. "How big a board ought I to get? I can carry a six-by-eight, twenty-four feet long, solid oak."

"Let him begin small," suggested Mr. Loneragan. "Get a small board, a two-by-four, three feet long. When he whittles that up, get him another. This is not a lumber car, you know, Hoxie."

So it was arranged that Mr. Lucy should stay in the car and whittle, and the freaks would sell the products of his knife, deducting the cost of his food and saving the balance toward a suit of clothes. Mr. Hoxie stepped out of the car and purloined a board.

"How long does it take one of these legless Chinks to whittle one of these chain things?" Mr. Lucy asked Major Ching.

"One year—two year—flee year," said Major Ching indefinitely.

"And how much can one of you fellows sell the chain for?" asked Mr. Lucy.

"Ten cents—twenty cents—a quarter of a dollar," said General Thumb.

Mr. Lucy sighed.

"I see I'm going to have to eat light, and even at that it's going to take some time to save that suit of clothes, but here goes! Love," he added soulfully, "—love works wonders. For love even an emperor of Rome will do the work of a legless Chink. Good-by, fellows."

The freaks, fully dressed, filed out of the car and strolled up town toward the mess tent, where they knew a hearty breakfast was awaiting them; and Mr. Lucy, after squinting along the board, spat on his hands, grasped the pen-knife, and set to work.

Signor Popetti, having bathed in violet water in his private car and having oiled his raven hair with scented pomatum, entered the low carriage with the four white ponies and was whirled to the circus grounds. Although his mind was full of the new spectacle, "The

Inferno of Dante," his heart did not allow him to give that mighty project his full thought, for he had decided that on this day he would put his fortune to the test and propose to the Circassian Girl. That she would accept him he had no doubt. The several wives he had had before had accepted him promptly and willingly, and he considered this as sufficient to establish the axiom that he was irresistible.

In arranging the stage for his proposal he used his well known virtuosity. The auspicious moment, he felt, would be just after Maggie had paraded past the new *Nero* in chains and had disappeared into the dressing tent. He



As his equipage flashed by the walking freaks, he raised his hat.

would be there and he would, with his own soft hands, undo her bonds and tell her he loved her. He would say something nice about chains.

As his equipage flashed by the walking freaks he raised his hat—it was a silk hat—hoping Maggie would guess the salutation was meant for her. Under which hat of the several lady freaks was the glorious yellow hair, he did not know. He took a chance. Had he known that Maggie was weeping in her bunk, the silk hat would never have been raised from his glossy curls.

In the car Mr. Lucy whittled until he was sure the freaks were well on their way, and then he laid the knife and the stick softly on the bed covers of his bunk and arose. He had had a thought. He slipped quietly out of the car door, stepped across the platform to Signor Popetti's car and entered. The car was silent. Outside, a rough-neck patrolled up and down with a tent stake in his hand to ward off intruders, but inside there was none to say Mr. Lucy nay. Signor Popetti's five trunks stood in his dressing room, and into these Mr. Lucy dived. From their contents he selected the finest of Signor Popetti's silken underwear, his finest shirt and his finest outer garments. Even a silk hat rewarded his search, and all these things he took, stilling his conscience—which did not riot greatly—with the thought that all was fair in Love. He meant to seek and see the Circassian Girl before Signor Popetti had an opportunity to do so.

He stepped back into the freak's car to stow his tunic safely away, and as he touched foot in the car he stopped short. A woman was sobbing!

While Mr. Lucy was out of the car, Maggie had searched high and low through the women's end of the car for her hair, but she had not found it, and for a good reason. It was in Orlando, and Orlando was in the hand-satchel Princess Zozo was carrying to the circus grounds. Overcome by the thought that her hair must have been thrown from the car window during the night, the Circassian Girl had burst into tears, and after the first explosion of grief was now sobbing violently.

Mr. Lucy hesitated and then entered the women's end of the car. The sight he saw would have touched the heart of a far more hardened *Nero*. The Circassian Girl sat on the floor of the car with eight wigs she had found in the other ladies' wardrobe trunks on the floor beside her, while a ninth was on her head. It was a black wig and considerably too large for her cranium. She held a hand mirror, and as she looked at her reflection in it her sobs increased. The sight was enough to make anyone sob. She looked up as Mr. Lucy entered.

Having seen him only in the boy's size tunic, it is not to be wondered at that she did not recognize Mr. Lucy in his neat black frock coat, white vest and striped trousers, nor is it surprising that Mr. Lucy did not recognize his beloved Circassian Girl in this creature in the black mop of hair.

"Say," he said kindly, "cut out the weeps, girly. They don't get you nowhere. What's paining you?"

Maggie controlled her sobs. She deftly exchanged the black wig for a brown one that was nearer her size, and wiped her eyes.

"I don't know what right you've got to butt in on my private sorrow, this way," she said, "but it's kind of you to do so. I can see you're a real gen'lem'n, and I don't mind sayin' that the way some cats treat a poor girl is not far distant from rough work. When a cat I always thought was my friend does to me what she done to me, all I gotta say is 'Good night!'"

"Meaning?" said Mr. Lucy.

"Meaning," said the Circassian Girl, "that a lady friend of mine has played me a dirty trick and put me in a bad box so she can have two or three days start to cop off that dago gen'lem'n that took a fancy to me. With me shut up here in this car and nothin' but other ladies' misfit hair to wear, she'll nail Popetti to her mast before—"

"Popetti!" exclaimed Mr. Lucy, naturally imagining that the speaker referred to the Circassian Girl, and little imagining that this was she. "She loves Popetti?"

"She's crazy about him!" said Maggie. "He's the only berry on the bush

for her. She can't see no one else with a microscope."

Mr. Lucy coughed modestly.

"Ah—you seem to know her well," he said. "You—maybe you were in this car last night when a—a man in a small but neat tunic entered. You were? Did you—do you know whether her heart holds any soft feeling for—for that man?"

"Him?" said Maggie with a laugh. "Say, she don't care a whang for him, not a tin-plated whang. You oughta heard the way she geyed him when he went out to haunt Popetti in his high-water petticoat. I—it made me mad."

"Why?" asked Mr. Lucy.

"Well, I don't mind sayin' I was stuck on that gen'lem'n from the first," said Maggie. "The way he was willin' to make a guy of hisself for love would touch any but a hardened heart. But he is like all the rest, I guess.

A good head of hair is the key to his affections. Men don't cling to solid worth when it's bald."

"And—are you sure the other lady will get Popetti? That she don't care for the—the Roman-lookin' gentleman?" asked Mr. Lucy tremulously.

"Am I sure? What do you think I was bawlin' for? Exercise?"

"Then I give her up!" said Mr. Lucy. "I let my love for her die in my heart. Zing! It is dead!"

"If that's how you feel," said Maggie, "we can have a triple funeral, for my love for the two gen'lem'n I made a hit with is goin' to starve to death before I can get another wig by parcel post from New York."

Mr. Lucy placed his hand on Maggie's shoulder. He felt a great pity for her and pity is first cousin to love. Although the brown wig was a little small for the girl it was

becoming. The way it sat on her head, a little to one side, was very coquettish.

"Two hearts like ours, bereft like they are, ought to entwine to—well, you know what I mean. We both got kicks against Fate, aint we? We ought to put both our feet in one shoe and kick together. I aint the kind of man that can love a girl that throws me down."

"Say, was you in love with her?" asked Maggie, her eyes brightening.

"I thought I was, but I wasn't," said Mr. Lucy. "I'm in love with a girl that's sitting on the floor of this car."

Maggie arose. She even smiled.

"Stop kiddin' me!" she said.

"I mean it," said Mr. Lucy. "The minute I saw you in that brown wig, my heart went pit-a-pat. I was a goner right then. All you got to say, dearie, is that you'll have me, and—"



He felt a great pity for her and pity is first cousin to love.

R.I.

"It would be a grand knock to her if she come back and found me engaged to a fine lookin' man like you, wouldn't it?" said Maggie.

"And it would be a solace to my feelings," said Mr. Lucy, taking Maggie's unresisting hand, "if she came back and saw that the heart she scorned was tied up to a girl that is better-looking than she ever dared to be, no matter what kind of hair she has. Will you be my honey?"

"Yes, sweetness," said Maggie and was about to throw herself into his arms, but he made her pause.

"Wait till I take off this silk hat," he said. "It don't fit me as well as it might."

He removed the hat and placed it carefully in an upper bunk.

"Come to my arms!" he said, but Maggie hesitated.

"Wait till I take off this hair," she said. "It aint mine and I don't want it to fall off and get spoiled."

She removed the wig. Then they embraced. He kissed her.

"Isn't it strange?" she said. "But a

few short moments ago I thought the only men I could ever love was Popetti or that man in the marked down tunic—"

"Tunic?" said Mr. Lucy. "But I *am* the man in the tunic. The strange thing is that I should love you so utterly when, but a short time since, I thought I could love none but the Circassian Girl—"

Maggie giggled.

"Aint you the limit!" she said fondly.

"I'm the Circassian Girl."

Mr. Lucy of Rome heaved a great sigh.

"Thank goodness!" he said. "Do you know, kid, I was scared of this love at first sight business all the time? 'Maybe it's all right,' my mind kept saying to my heart, 'but it's risky! It aint natural for two to love like this on a sudden. Will it last?' And now, come to find out, we are us, and 'we was us all the time we thought we wasn't us. Aint love the limit!"

Maggie snuggled against the lapel of Signor Popetti's coat.

"Aint it!" she sighed rapturously.

IN "Waw Waw," Mr. Butler's story in the June Red Book, the freaks, led by the wild man, who is a graduate of Harvard, go in for literature and culture. Anyone who has ever laughed at Weber and Fields or the Rogers brothers is pretty sure to enjoy these stories.

The Previous Chapters of The New Chester Novel

GAIL SARGENT, a brown-eyed glory of a girl from a small inland city, walks into a vestry meeting of the wealthy Market Square Church, New York, where her Uncle Jim Sargent and seven other millionaire vestrymen are haggling over a fifty-million-dollar deal with Edward E. Allison, who has built up the gigantic traction lines of the city. The church wants fifty millions for its Vedder Court tenement property, which Allison is anxious to buy for less, for traction terminals.

"How do you like our famous old church?" says the Rev. Smith Boyd, the handsome young rector, who hopes to use the fifty millions to build the most magnificent cathedral in America.

"It seems to be a remarkably lucrative enterprise," smiles Gail. Allison hears and his eyes twinkle. He presses Gail to let him drive her home.

Allison indulges in the weakness of bragging—tells her he has worked his way to the summit of a splendid achievement and has decided to rest.

"Why?" asks the girl. Of a sudden he feels like a pricked bubble. Why indeed should a man of his ability stop? And he decides to achieve something that will command her respect.

He draws across a map of the United States, lines indicating railroads which, connected, would make the most direct route from New York to San Francisco—then proceeds to buy those roads. He calls in old Tim Corman, political boss, and arranges for condemnation of the Vedder Court tenements, and the building under the river of an eight-track tube, ostensibly for a municipal subway.

Because this subway is the only crack through which a railroad could get into the heart of New York City, Allison's plan is to have his railroad and street transportation depot all in one big building in Vedder Court, so travelers may step off a train onto an "L." or into a subway.

Howard Clemmens, a home-city suitor, jealous of Gail's surroundings, begs her to marry at once. She refuses, for she realizes that her interests are only in powerful men.

Allison calls a meeting of the seven men whose combined trusts control all the food, coal, iron and building commodities of America. He shows

them his railroad, and proposes that they form one world-powerful trust.

"Who is to be monarch of your new empire?" asks one.

"The best man," answers Allison, and the seven realize that there are now eight great men in the country.

As his subway is nearing completion, Allison takes Gail and a party of friends, including the Rev. Smith Boyd, on a trial run in a private car. There is a cave-in, and in the end Allison and Boyd, digging together, save the party. This brings Gail into sensational newspaper prominence and she, in chagrin, returns to her home.

Gail's home friends welcome her with every attention. But the smaller city festivities pall, and she returns to New York.

Both Allison and the Rev. Smith Boyd hasten to see her. Boyd pleads with her to marry, but she refuses, because she feels they would clash over their church views.

Meanwhile the New York newspapers have published scathing stories of the great profit the fashionable Market Square Church is making out of its Vedder Court property. The vestrymen decide to accept Allison's offer, if he will renew it; but he tells them the campaign against their property has reduced its value. They are astounded to find also that their rector has begun to feel the disgrace of the church's making a profit from the misery of the poor. Unable to agree, the vestrymen postpone a decision.

Meantime, Gail is the center of a series of gaieties. Houston Van Ploon, the best "catch" in New York, and Dick Rodley, the star "heart-breaker" of the city, both propose, but she refuses them.

Allison is completing his world transportation system by bribing officials and even governments, and by laying the groundwork for at least one big war.

He takes Gail for a ride and tells her what he has done. He is building an empire and she is to be Empress. She is dazed and suffers him to crush her in his arms, but demands time to think. By the next morning, the newspapers begin issuing one extra after another, telling of Allison's plans for a world-wide trust. Gail is troubled by the question of how he has accomplished it.

The Ball of Fire

By George Randolph Chester

Author of "Wallingford," etc.

and Lillian Chester

LATE in the afternoon, Jim Sargent came home, drawn, fagged, and with hollows under his eyes. He had a violent headache, and he looked ten years older. He walked slowly into the library, where Mrs. Sargent and Mrs. Davies and Gail were discussing the future of Vedder Court, and dropped into a chair.

Grace Sargent rang a bell instantly. When Jim felt that way, he needed a hot drink first of all.

"What is the matter?" she asked him, the creases of worry flashing into her brow.

"It's been a hard day," he explained, forcing himself to answer. Years of persistent experience had taught him to follow the line of least resistance. "There has been a panic on 'Change. Railroads are going to smash, all up and down the line. Allison's new A.-P. road! It's the star piracy of the century. Allison has brought into the railroad game the same rough-shod methods he used in his traction manipulations."

"Has your company been hurt, Jim?" asked his wife, fully prepared for the worst, and making up her mind to bear up bravely under it.

"Not yet," replied Sargent, and he passed his hand over his brow. He was already making a tremendous effort to brace himself for to-morrow's ordeal. "I escaped to-day through an accident. By some mistake the Towando Valley was mentioned as belonging to the new A.-P. combination. Of course I didn't correct

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See Frontispiece

it; but by to-morrow they'll know."

"Mr. Allison was responsible for that statement," Gail serenely informed her uncle. "He promised he'd take care of you."

"Great guns!" exploded her uncle. "What did you know about this thing?"

"All of it," smiled Gail. She had known that Allison would keep his word, but it gave her a strange sense of relief that he had done so.

Her Aunt Helen turned to her with a commanding eye; but Gail merely dimpled.

"Of course I couldn't say anything," went on Gail. "It was all in confidence. Isn't it glorious, Uncle Jim!"

"You wouldn't have thought so if you'd been down town to-day," responded her uncle, trying again to erase from his brow the damage which had been done to his nerves. "They wanted to mob Allison. He has cut the ground from under the entire railroad business of the United States. Their stocks have deflated an aggregate of billions of dollars, and the slump is permanent! He has bankrupted a host of men, rifled the pockets of a million poor investors; he has demoralized the entire transportation commerce of the United States; and he gave no one the show of a rat in a trap!"

"Isn't that business?" asked Gail, the red spots beginning to come into her cheeks.

"Not quite!" snapped her Uncle Jim. "Fiction has made that the universal

idea, but there are decent men in business. The majority of them are, even in railroading. Most roads are organized and conducted for the sole purpose of carrying freight and passengers at a profit for the stockholders, and spectacular stock jobbing is the exception rather than the rule."

"Has Mr. Allison been more unfair than others who have made big consolidations?" demanded Gail, again aware of the severely inquiring eye of Aunt Helen.

"Rotten!" replied her uncle, with an emphasis in which there was much of personal feeling. "He has taken tricky advantage of every unprotected loophole. He won from the Inland Pacific, at the mere cost of trackage, a passage which the Inland built, by brilliant engineering, and at an almost countless cost."

"Isn't that accounted clever?" asked Gail.

"So is the work of a confidence man or a wire-tapper!" was the retort. "But they are sent to jail just the same. The Inland created something. It built, with brains and money and force and sincere commercial enterprise, a line which won it a well-earned supremacy of the Pacific trade. It was entitled to keep it; yet Allison, by making with it a tricky contract for the restricted use of the very key to its supremacy, employs that very device to destroy it. He has bankrupted, or will have done so, a two-thousand-mile railroad system, which is of tremendous commercial value to the country, in order to use a hundred miles of its track and remove it from competition! Allison has created nothing. He has only seized, by stealth, what others have created. He is not even a commercial highwayman. He is a commercial pickpocket!"

Gail had paled by now.

"Tell me one thing," she demanded. "Wouldn't any of the railroad men have resorted to this trick if they had been shrewd enough to think of it?"

"A lot of them," was the admission, after an awkward pause. "Does that make it morally and ethically correct?"

"You may be prejudiced, Jim," interpolated Aunt Helen, moving closer to Gail. "If they are all playing the game

that way, I don't see why Mr. Allison shouldn't receive applause for clever play."

"You bet I'm prejudiced!" snarled Sargent, overcoming his weariness, and pacing up and down the library floor. "He came near playing my road the same trick he did the Inland Pacific. He secured control of the L. and C., because it has a twenty-year contract for passage over fifty miles of our track. He'd throw the rest of our line away like a peanut hull, if he had not promised Gail to protect me. I'm an object of charity!"

"Oh!" It was a scarcely audible cry of pain. Aunt Helen moved closer, and patted her head. Gail did not notice the action.

"Why did he make you that promise, Gail?" demanded her uncle, turning on her suddenly, with a physical motion so much like her father's that she was startled.

"He wants me to marry him," faltered Gail.

Aunt Grace sat down by the other side of Gail.

"Have you accepted him, dear?" she asked.

There was a lump in Gail's throat. She could not answer!

"She'll never marry him with my consent!" stormed her Uncle Jim. "Nor with Miles'! The fellow's an unscrupulous scoundrel! He's made of cruelty from his toes to his hair! He stops at nothing! He even robbed Market Square Church of six million dollars!"

Gail's head suddenly went up in startled inquiry. She wanted still to defend Allison; but she dreaded what was to come.

"We wouldn't sell him Vedder Court at his price; so he took it from us at six million less than he originally offered. He did that by a trick, too!"

All three women looked up at him in breathless interest.

"He had the city condemn Vedder Court," went on Sargent. "If he had condemned it outright for the Municipal Transportation Company, he would have had to pay us about the amount of his original offer; but his own private and particular devil put the idea into his



"Of course we'll come," agreed Gail. "Doctor Boyd, can't you arrange for a week-end party once in your life?"

head that the Vedder Court tenements should be torn down anyhow, for the good of the public! So he had the buildings condemned first, destroying six million dollars worth of value; then he had the ground condemned! Tim Corman probably got about a million dollars for that humanitarian job!"

A wild fit of sobbing startled them all.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Love

ALLISON swept Gail into his arms and rained hot kisses upon her, crushing her closely to him. Gail offered no resistance, and the very fact that she lay so supinely in his arms made Allison release her sooner than he might otherwise have done. She had known that this experience must come, that no look or gesture of hers could ward it off.

"You must never do that again," she told him, stepping back from him, and regaining her breath with an effort. She had lingered in the front parlors, to receive him before her Uncle Jim should know that he was in the house, and she had led him straight into the little tête-à-tête reception room. She meant to free herself quickly.

"Why not?" he laughed, and advanced toward her, taking her attitude lightly, ascribing her action to a girlish whim, confident in his power over her. He meant to dispose of her coyness by taking her in his arms again. She belonged to him.

"Mr. Allison." The tone was cold enough and deadly in earnest enough to arrest him.

"What's the matter, Gail?" he protested, ready to humor her, to listen to what she had to say, to smooth matters out.

"You have no right," she told him.

"Yes I have," he assured her jovially. "I hope I don't have to wait until after marriage for a kiss. If that's the case, I'll take you out and marry you right now."

There was an infection in his laugh, contagion in the assumption that all was right between them, and that any difference was one which could be straightened out with jolly patience; and Gail,

though her determination would not have changed, might have softened toward him had she not seen in his face a look which paled her lips. Ever since last night he had anticipated her, had rejoiced in his possession of her, had dreamed on the time when he should take her for his own; and his eyes were cloudy with his thoughts of her.

"Let us have a thorough understanding, Mr. Allison." She was quite erect, and looking him directly in the eyes. Her own were deep and troubled, and the dark trace which had been about them in the morning had deepened. "I told you last night that I should need time in which to decide; and I have decided. I shall not marry you."

He returned her gaze for a moment, and his brow darkened.

"You've changed since last night," he charged her.

"Possibly," she admitted, reflecting that doubtless she had merely crystallized. "I prefer not to discuss it." She saw on his face the growing instinct to humiliate her.

"You must discuss it," he insisted. "Last night when I took you in my arms you made no objection. I was justified in doing it again to-night. You're not a fool. You knew from the first that I wanted you, and you encouraged me. Now I'm entitled to know what has made the change."

The tell-tale red spots began to appear in her cheeks.

"You," she told him. "Last night your scheme of world empire seemed a wonderful thing to me, but since then I've discovered that it cannot be built without dishonesty and cruelty; and you've used both."

His brow cleared. He laughed.

"You've been reading the papers. There isn't a man in the financial field who wouldn't do everything I've done; and be proud of it. I can make you see this in the right light, Gail."

"It's a proof of your moral callousness that you think so," she informed him. "Can you make me see it in the right light that you even used me, of whom you pretended to think sacredly enough to marry, to help you in your most despicable trick of all?"

"Look here," he protested, "that would be impossible! You're misinformed."

"I wish I were," she returned. "Unfortunately, it is a matter of direct knowledge. You caused Vedder Court to be torn down because I thought it should be wiped out of existence, and in the process you cheated Market Square Church out of six million dollars!"

He was distinctly aggrieved.

"I knew you did not understand," he kindly reproved her. "I didn't want those old buildings. They couldn't have sold them for the wreckage price. When you suggested that they should be torn down, I saw it. They were a public menace, and the public was right with the movement. The condemnation price will cover all they could get from the property from any source. You see, you don't understand business." And his tone was forgiving. "I'd have been foolish to pay six million dollars for something I couldn't use. You know, Gail, when the commissioners came to look over those tenements they were shocked! Some of the buildings wouldn't have stood up another year. It was only the political influence of Clark and Chisholm, and a few of the other big guns of the congregation, which kept them from being condemned long ago. You shouldn't interfere in business. It always creates trouble between man and wife." And he advanced to put his arm around her, and soothe her.

The hand with which she warded him off was effective this time. She stared at him in wonder. It seemed inconceivable that the moral sense of any intelligent man should be so blunted.

"There's another reason," she told him, despairing of making him realize that he had done anything out of the way. "I do not love you. I could not."

For just a moment he was checked; then his jaws set.

"That is something you must learn. You have young notions of love, gleaned from poetry and fiction. You conceive it to be an ideal stage of existence, a mysterious something almost too delicate for perception by the human senses. I will teach you love, Gail! Look." And he stretched up his firm arm, as if in his

grip he already held the reins of the mighty empire he was hewing out for her. "Love is a thing of strength, of power, of desire which shakes and burns and consumes with fever! It is like the lust to kill! It whips and it goads and it drives! It creates! It puts new images into the brain; it puts new strength into the sinews; it puts new life into the blood! It cries out! It demands! It has caused me to turn back from middle-age to youth, to renew all my ambitions, a thousandfold enhanced by my maturity! It has caused me to grapple the world by the throat, and shake it; throttle it, so that I might drag it, quivering, to your feet, and say, 'This is yours; kick it!' That is love, Gail! It drives one on to do great deeds! It gives one the impulse to recognize no bounds, no bars, no obstacles! It has put all my being into the attainment of things big enough to show you the force of my will, and what it could conquer! Do you suppose that, with such love driving me on, any objection which you may make will stop me? No! I set out to attain you as the summit of my desire, the one thing in this world I want, and will have!"

Again that great fear of him possessed Gail. She feared many things. She feared that, notwithstanding her decision, he would still have her, and in that possibility alone lay all the other fears, fears so gruesome that she did not dare see them clearly. She knew that she must retain absolute control of herself.

"I shall not discuss the matter any further," she quietly said, and walking straight towards the door, passed by him quite within the reach of his arm, without either looking at him or away from him. Something within his own strength respected hers, in spite of him. "I have said all that I have to say," she added.

"So have I," he replied, coming closer to her as she stood in the doorway, and he gazed down at her with eyes in which there was insolent determination and cruelty. "I have said that I mean to have you, and I will."

Without a word, she went into the hall. He followed her, and took his hat.

"Good evening," he said formally.

"Good evening," she replied, and he went out of the door.

When he had gone, she flew up to her rooms, her first coherent thought being that she had accomplished it! She had seen Allison, and had given him her definite answer, and had got him out of the house while the others were back in the billiard room. She had held up splendidly, but she was weak, now, and quivering in every limb, and she sank on her divan, supported on one outstretched arm; and, in this uncomfortable position, she took up the eternal question of Gail. The angry tears of mortification sprang into her eyes.

A half hour later, her Aunt Grace came up, and found her in the same position.

"Mrs. Boyd and Doctor Boyd are downstairs, dear," she announced.

Gail straightened up with difficulty. Her arm was numb.

"Please make my excuses, Aunt," she begged.

"What's the matter?" asked Aunt Grace, the creases jumping into her brow, as if they lay somewhere in the roots of her hair, ready to spring down at an instant's notice. "Aren't you feeling well? Shall I get you something?"

"No, thank you, Aunt dear," smiled Gail wanly. "I'm just a little fatigued."

"Then don't you come a step." And Aunt Grace beamed down on Gail with infinite tenderness. She had an intuition, these days, that Gail was troubled; and her sympathies were ready for instant production. "You'll have to tell me what to say, though, I'm so clumsy at it."

"Just tell them the truth," smiled Gail, and punching two pillows together, she stretched herself at full length on the divan.

Her Aunt Grace regarded her with a puzzled expression for a moment, and then she laughed.

"I see; you're lying down." She looked at Gail thoughtfully for a moment. "Dear, could you close your eyes?"

"Certainly," agreed Gail, and the brown lashes curved down on her cheeks, though there was a sharp little glint from under the edges of her lids.

Her Aunt Grace stooped and kissed the smooth white brow; then she went downstairs and entered the library.

"Gail is lying down," she primly reported. "Her eyes are closed."

The library was quite steadily devoted to Vedder Court to-night. A highly important change had come into the fortunes of Market Square Church. It was as if a stone had been thrown into a group of cardboard houses. All the years of planning had gone the way of the wind, and the card houses had all to be built over again. The cathedral had receded by a good five years, unless the force and fire of the Reverend Smith Boyd should be sufficient to coax capital out of the pockets of his millionaire congregation; and, in fact, that quite normal plan was already under advisement.

The five of this impromptu counsel were deep in the matter of ways and means, when a slender apparition, in clinging gray, came down the stairs. It was Gail, who, for some reason unknown even to herself, had decided that she was selfish; and the Reverend Smith Boyd's heart ached as he saw the pallor on her delicately tinted cheeks and the dark tracing about her brown eyes. She slipped quietly in among them, her brown hair loosely waved, so that unexpected threads of gold shone in it when she passed under the chandelier, and she greeted the callers pleasantly, and sat in the corner, very silent. She was glad that she had come. It was restful in this little circle of friends.

A noise filled the hall, and even the lights of the library seemed to brighten, as Lucile and Ted, Arly and Gerald, and Dick Rodley, came tumbling in, laughing and chattering and carrying hilarity in front of them like a wave. Gail shoved her tangle of thoughts still further back in her head, and the sparkle returned into her eyes.

"We're bringing you a personal invitation to Arly and Gerald's yacht party," jabbered Lucile, kissing everybody in reach except the Reverend Smith Boyd.

"You might let Arly extend the invitation herself," objected Ted.

"I've given the pleasure to Gerald," laughed Arly, with a vivacious glance at that smiling gentleman. "He does it so much better. Now listen."

"It's a little informal week-end party, on the *Whitecap*," Gerald informed

them, with a new something in him which quite satisfactorily took the place of cordiality. "Sort of a farewell affair. Arly and I are about to take a selfish two months' cruise, all by ourselves." And he glanced fondly at the handsome black-haired young woman under discussion. "We should be pleased to have you join us." He included Mrs. Boyd and the young Rector, with a nod.

"Of course we'll come," agreed Gail. "Doctor Boyd, can't you arrange for a week-end party once in your life?"

"Unfortunately, custom has decreed that week-end parties shall cover Sundays," he regretted, but there was a calculating look in his eye which sent Lucile over to him.

"Play hookey just once," she begged. "This is only a family crowd."

The Reverend Smith Boyd looked at his mother, and that lady brightened visibly.

"When is it to be?" he asked.

"Saturday," Arly informed him, joining Lucile, who had sat on the arm of Mrs. Boyd's chair. Arly sat on the other one, and Gerald Fosland, with an entirely new appreciation of beauty, thought he had never seen a prettier picture than the sweet-faced old lady with the fresh and charming young women on either side of her.

The Reverend Smith Boyd glanced, for just an instant, at Gail, who was now sitting on the leather couch leaning confidently against her Aunt Grace. He had been at some pains to avoid this young lady recently, for it is natural to spare oneself distress; but there was a look of loneliness about her which sent his heart out to her in quick sympathy.

"I think I'll play hookey," he announced, with a twinkle in the eyes which he now cast upon his mother.

"That's being a good sport," approved Ted. "Stay away a Sunday or two, and Market Square Church will appreciate you better."

"Let's have some music, Gail," demanded Lucile.

"Gail and Doctor Boyd must sing for you," announced Aunt Grace, in whom there was a trace of wistfulness. "They do sing so beautifully together!"

"I'm afraid I can't to-night," refused

Gail hastily, and indeed she had good reason why her voice should not have its firm and true quality just now. "I will accompany Doctor Boyd, though, with pleasure." And she started towards the music room.

The Reverend Smith Boyd was cut off from the ordinary lies about not being in good voice, and suffering from a slight cold, and such things. He hesitated a moment, and then he followed.

The "Bedouin Love Song," the "Garden of Sleep," and others of the solo repertory which Gail had selected for him came pulsing out of the music room, first hesitantly and then with more strength, as the friendly nearness between himself and the accompanist became better established.

Presently the listeners in the library noticed an unusual pause between the songs, a low-voiced discussion, and then the two perfectly blended voices rose in a harmony so perfect that there was moisture in the eyes of two of the ladies present.

CHAPTER XXIX

Gail First!

ALLISON, springing forward with a jerk as he left Jim Sargent's house, headed his long, low runabout up the Avenue. He raced into the Park, and glanced up at the look-out house as he sped on past; but it was only a fleeting look. He needed no reminder of Gail, and he scarcely noticed that he was following the same road which they had so often taken together. His only impulse had been to drive somewhere at top speed, and he had automatically chosen this path. The night was damp and chill, but his evening top coat was open, revealing the white glint of his shirt front. He did not seem to mind. As he passed Roseleaf Inn, he was scarcely aware of it, but the roadhouse may have given him, and probably did, another reminder of Gail in such a manner as to concentrate him into logical thought; for he slowed down the terrific speed which had been the accompaniment of his unreasoning emotion. The driving required too much attention for specific thought.

With this turning of his mental attitude, even the slow running of the car seemed to disturb him, and, about half a mile past Roseleaf Inn, he came to a stop, sitting at the wheel with his head bent slightly forward and staring at the spot where the roadway had ceased to roll beneath his machine. Presently he became aware of the cold, and running his car to the side of the road, he stepped out. Buttoning his coat around him, he crossed a fence and walked through the narrow strip of trees to the river-bank, where he stood for a moment looking out upon the misty Hudson, sparkling under the moonlight. He began to walk up and down the bank presently, the turf sinking spongily under his feet, and it was noticeable that his pace grew more and more rapid, until he was striding at a furious rate of speed.

The man was in a torment of passion. He had spent a lifetime in the deliberate acquisition of everything upon which he had set his will; and it was one of the things upon which he had built his success, that, once he had fixed his desire upon anything, he had held unwaveringly to that object, employing all the forces of which strong men are capable: patient waiting, dogged persistence, or vicious grappling, whichever was best adapted to gain his ends.

Gail! If there had been tender thoughts of her, they were gone now. He saw her in a thousand enchantments, sitting beside him, clad in the white furs which added such piquancy to her rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes; lounging in the library, in some filmy, clinging robe which defined her grace, half concealing and half suggesting the long, delicately curving lines which had so appealed to his ruthlessness; at the piano, her beautiful small head slightly bent forward, displaying the exquisite line at the nape of her neck, her brown hair waving backward to a simple knot, her rounded white arms free from the elbows, and her slender fingers flashing over the keys; coming down the stairway, in the filmy cream lace gown which had made her seem so girlishly fragile, her daintily blue slippered feet, and her finely turned ankles giving a hint of the grace and suppleness of her whole self; in her

black beaded ball costume, its sparkling deadness livening the soft ivory tints of her neck and shoulders and bosom with startling effectiveness. In these and a thousand other glowing pictures he saw her, and with every added picture there came a new pain in his thought of her.

He felt the warmth of her hand upon his arm, the brush of her shoulder against his own, the mere elbow touch as she sat beside him in the car, the many little careless contacts of daily life, unconscious to her, but to him fraught always with flame; and, finally, that maddening moment when he had crushed her in his arms, and so had made, for all time to come, the possession of her a necessity almost maniacal in the violence of its determination. He heard the sound of her voice, in all its enchanting cadences, from the sweetness of her murmured aside to the ring of her laugh; and the delicate fragrance which was a part of her overwhelmed him, now, in remembrance, like an unnerving faintness!

It was so that he had centered his mind upon her, and himself and his will, until, in all creation, there was nothing else but that was trivial; ambition, power, wealth, fame, the command of empires and of men, were nothing, except as they might lead to her!

As a boy, Allison had been endowed with extraordinary strength. From a mother who had married beneath her socially he had inherited a certain redeeming refinement of taste, a richness of imagination, a certain extravagance, a certain daring and confidence. Had his heredity been left to the father alone, he would have developed into a mere brute, fighting for the love of inflicting pain, his ambitions confined to physical supremacy alone. As it was, the combination had made of him a brute more dangerous by the addition of intelligence.

In spite of gentle surroundings, he had run away persistently to play in a rough-and-tumble neighborhood, where he had been the terror of boys a head taller than himself, and had established an unquestioned tyranny among them. He had a passion at that time for killing cats, and a devilish ingenuity in devising

new modes of torture for them—saturating them with gasoline and burning them alive, and other such ghastly amusements. The cruelty of this he had from the father, the ingenuity from the mother. In a fleeting introspection, a review which could have occupied but a few seconds of time, he saw back through the years of his passion, for every year had been a passion of supremacy, as if the cinematograph of his life had flashed swiftly before him, pausing for illumination at certain points which had marked the attainment of hard-won goals.

During the days of his schooling, the mother in him had made him crave the acquisition of knowledge, in spite of the physical instincts which drove him to out-door sports. He succeeded in both. He went at his lessons viciously, no doubt because they were a something which had a tendency to baffle him, and he had perhaps made no braver fights than in those lonely nights when, angry and determined, he had grappled with his books and conquered them. He had won football honors at the same time. It was said that half of the victories of his team came through the fear, on the opposing elevens, of Allison. He had the reputation of being a demon on the gridiron. His eyes became slightly bloodshot in every contest, and he went into every battle with a smile on his lips which was more like a snarl. His rise to football supremacy was well remembered all through life by a dozen cripples.

Then business. A different sort of cruelty entered there. He had a method of advancement which was far more effective than adroitness. With the same vicious fever of achievement which had marked the conquering of his books, he had made himself flawlessly efficient, and had contrasted himself deliberately with whatever weakness he could find in his superiors. On the day when the superintendent drank, Allison took especial pains to create an emergency—a breakdown in the power plant—and showed himself, side by side with the temporarily stupid superintendent, clear-eyed, firm-jawed, glowing-cheeked, ready to grapple with his own emergency.

He became superintendent. Trickery,

now. A block of stock here, a block of stock there, a combination of small holdings, by which an unsuspected group of outsiders swept in with control of that first little street-car company. Allison's was the smallest block of shares in that combination, infinitesimal as compared with the total capitalization of the company—the investment of his limited savings combined with all the borrowing he could manage. Yet, since he had organized the rebellion, he was left in its control by the same personal dominance with which he had brought together the warring elements. Less than two years after his accession to management, he had frozen out the associates who had put him in power. They none of them knew how it was done, but they did know that he had taken advantage of every tricky opportunity his position gave him, and they were bitter about it. He laughed at them, and he thrashed the man who complained loudest, a man who had lost every cent of his money through Allison's manipulations. Well, that was the way of business. The old rule of conquest that might makes right had only gone out of favor as applied to physical oppression. In everything else it still prevailed; and Allison was its chief exponent.

The years that followed! Combinations and consolidations had followed closely one upon the other; brilliant and bewildering shiftings of the pieces on the chess-board of his particular business. Other players had become confused in all these kaleidoscopic changes, some of which had seemed meaningless; but not Allison. Every shift left him in a position of more ruthless advantage, even in those moves which were intended only to create confusion; and he pushed steadily forward towards the one mark he had set for himself: that there should be none other in the field than himself! It was because he never flagged that he could do this. At no summit had he ever paused for gratification over the extent of his climb, for a backward glance over his fiercely contended pathway, for refreshment, for breath; but with that exhaustless physical vitality inherited from his father and mental vitality inherited from his mother, he had kept his face forward.

plunging onward from summit to still higher summit, and never asking that there might be one highest peak to which he could attain, and rest. True, sometimes he had thought, on the upward way, that at the summit he might pause, but had that summit been the highest, with none other luring him in the distant sky, he would have been disappointed.

So it was that he had come this far, and the roadway to his present height was marked by the cripples he had left behind him, without compunction, without mercy, without compassion. Bankrupts strewed his way, broken men of purpose higher than his own, useful factors in the progress of human life, builders and creators who had advanced the interest of the commonwealth, but who had been more brilliant in construction than they had been in reaping the rewards of their building. It was for Allison to do this! It had been his specialty, the reaping of rewards. It had been his faculty to permit others to build, to encourage them in it, and then, when the building was done, to wrest it away from the builders. That marked him as the greatest commercial genius of his time; and he had much applause for it.

Women. Yes, there had been women, creatures of a common mould with whom he had amused himself, had taken them in their freshness, and broken them, and thrown them away—this in his earlier years. But, in his maturity, he had bent all his strength to a greater passion: the acquirement of all those other things which men had wanted and held most dear, among them acquisition, and power, and success! Perhaps it had been bad for him, this concentration, for now it left him, at the height of his maturity, with mistaken fancies, with long pent fires, with disproportionate desires. In addition to these, he had the tremendously abnormal moral effect of never having been thwarted in a thing upon which he had set his mind, and of believing, by past accomplishment, that anything upon which he had set his wish must be his, or else every victory he had ever gained would be swept aside and made of no value. He must accomplish, or die!

He was without God, this man; he had

nothing within him which conceded, for a moment, a greater power than his own. In all his mental imagery, which was rich enough in material things, there was no conception of a Deity, or of a need for one. To what should he pray, and for what, when he had himself to rely upon? Worship was an idealistic diversion, a poetic illusion, the refuge of the weak, who excused their lack of strength by ascribing it to a mysterious something beyond the control of any man. He tolerated the popular notion that there must be a God as he tolerated codes of social ethics—the conventions which laid down, for instance, what a gentleman might or might not do, externally, and still remain a gentleman. In the meantime, if a man-made law came between him and the accomplishment of his ends, he broke it, without a trace of the thought that he might be wrong. Laws were the mutual safeguard of the weak, to protect themselves against the encroachment of the strong; and it was in the equally natural province of the strong to break down those safeguards. In the same way he disregarded moral laws. They too were for the upholding of the weak, and the mere fact that they existed was proof enough that they were an acknowledgment of the right of the strong to break them.

There is a mistake here. It lies in the statement that Allison recognized no God. He did—Allison. Not Allison, the man, but the unconquerable will of Allison, a will which was a divinity in itself. He believed in it, centered on it all his faith, poured out to it all the fervidness of his heart, of his mind, of his spirit, of his body. He worshiped it.

So it was that he came to the consideration of the one thing which had attempted to deny itself to him. Gail! It seemed monstrous to him that she had set herself against him. It was incredible that she should have a will, which, if she persisted, should prove superior to his own. Why, he had set his mind upon her from the first! The time had suddenly arrived when he was ripe for her, and she had come. He had not even given a thought to the many suitors who had dangled about her. She was for none of them. She was for him, and he had

waited in patience until she was tired of amusing herself, and until he had wrought the big ambition towards which her coming—and her impulse, and the new fire she had kindled in him—had directed him. She had been seriously in earnest in withholding herself from him. She was determined upon it. She believed now, in her soul, that she could keep to that determination. At first he had been amused by it, as a man holds off the angry onslaught of a child, but in this last interview with her there had come a moment when he had felt his vast compulsion valueless; and it had angered him.

A flame raged through his veins which fairly shook him with its violence. It was not only the reflex of his resolution to have her, but it was the terrific need of her which had grown up in him. Have her? Of course he would have her! If she would not come to him willingly, he would take her! If she could not share in the ecstasy of possession which he had so long anticipated, she need not! She was not to be considered in it any more than he had considered any other adverse factor in the attainment of anything he had desired. He was seized of a rage now, which centered itself upon one object, and one alone: Gail! She was his new summit, his new peak, the final one where he had planned to rest; but now his angry thought was to attain it, and spurn it, broken and crumbled, as had been all the other barriers to his will, and press ruthlessly onward into higher skies, he knew not where. It was no time now, to think on that. Gail first!

CHAPTER XXX

The Flutter of a Sheet of Music.

GAIL, in a pretty little rose-colored morning robe with soft frills of lace around her white throat and at her white elbows, sat on the floor of the music-room amid a chaos of sheet music. She was humming a gay little song suggested by one of the titles through which she had leafed, and was gradually sorting her music for the yacht party—instrumental pieces here, popular things there, another little pile of old-fashioned glees

which the assembled crowd might sing, just here a stack of her own solos, near by the Rector's favorites, between the two their duets. It was her part in one of the latter she was humming now, missing, as she sang, the strong accompaniment of the Reverend Smith Boyd's mellow voice. She was more peaceful this morning than she had been for many days.

The butler came through the hall, and Gail looked up with a suppressed giggle as she saw him pass the door. She always had an absurd idea that his hinges should be oiled.

"Miss Gail is not at home, sir," she heard the butler say, and she paused with a sheet of music suspended in her hand, the whole expression of her face changing. She had given instructions that only one person should receive that invariable message.

"I beg your pardon, sir!" was the next observation Gail heard, in a tone of as near startled remonstrance as was possible to the butler's wooden voice.

There was a sound almost as of a scuffle, and then Allison with his top coat on his arm and his hat in his hand, strode to the doorway of the music-room, followed immediately by the butler, who looked as if his hair had been peeled a little at the edges. Allison had apparently brushed roughly past him, and had disturbed his equanimity for the balance of his life.

Gail was on her feet almost on the instant the apparition had appeared in the doorway, and she still held the sheet of music which she had been about to deposit on one of the piles. Allison's eyes had a queer effect of being sunken, and there was a strange nervous tension in him. Gail dismissed the butler.

"You were informed that I am not at home," she said to Allison then.

"I meant to see you," he replied, with a certain determined insolence in his tone which she could not escape. There was a triumph in it, too, as if his having swept the butler aside were only a part of his imperious intention. "I have some things to say to you to which you must listen."

"You had better say them all, then, because this is your last opportunity," she told him, pale with anger.

He cast on her a look which blazed. He had not slept since he had seen her last. He smiled, and the smile was a snarl displaying his teeth. Something more than anger crept into Gail's pallor.

"I have come to ask you again to marry me, Gail. The matter is too vital to be let pass without the most serious effort of which I am capable. I cannot do without you. I have a need for you which is greater than anything of which you could conceive. I come to you humbly, Gail, to ask you to reconsider your hasty answer of last night. I want you to marry me."

For just a moment his eyes had softened, and Gail felt a slight trace of pity for him, but in the pity itself there was revulsion.

"I cannot," she told him.

"You must!" he immediately rejoined. "As I would build up an empire to win you, I would destroy one to win you. You spoke, last night, of what you called the cruelty and trickery of the building-up of my big transportation monopoly. If it is that which stands between us, it shall not do so for a moment longer. Marry me, and I will stop it just where it is. Why, I only built this for you, and, if you don't like it, I shall have nothing to do with it." In that he lied, and consciously. He knew that the moment he had made sure of her his ambition to conquer would come uppermost again, and that he would pursue his dream of conquest with even more ardor than before, because he had been refreshed.

"That would make no difference, Mr. Allison," she replied. "I told you, last night, that I would not marry you because I do not, and could not love you. There does not need to be any other reason." There was in her an inexplicable tension, a reflex of his own, but, though her face was still pale, she stood very calmly before him.

The savageness which was in him, held too long in leash, sprang into his face, his eyes, his lips, the set of his jaws. He advanced a step towards her. His hands contracted.

"I shall not again ask you to love me," he harshly stated; "but you must marry me! I have made up my mind to that."

"Impossible!"

"I'll make you! There is no resource I will not use! I'll bankrupt your family! I'll wipe it off the earth!"

Gail's nails were pressing into her palms. She felt that her lips were cold. Her eyes were widening, as the horror of him began to grow on her. He was glaring at her now, and there was no attempt to conceal the savage cruelty on his face.

"I'll compromise you!" he went on. "I'll connect your name with mine in such a way that marriage with me will be your only resource. I'll be an influence you can't escape. There will not be a step you can take in which you will not feel that I am the master of it. Marry you? I'll have you if it takes ten years! I'll have no other end in life. I'll put into that one purpose all the strength, and all the will that I have put into the accomplishment of everything which I have done; and the longer you delay me, the sooner I'll break you when I do get you!"

Out of her very weakness had come strength; out of her overwhelming humiliation had come pride, and, though the blood had left her face waxen and cold, something within her discovered a well which was as strong in resistance as his was in attack. She knew it, and trembled in the knowledge of it.

"You can't make me marry you," she said, with infinite scorn and contempt.

He clenched his fists and gritted his teeth. Into his eyes there sprang a blaze which she had never before seen, but dimly, in the eyes of any man; but she needed no experience to tell her its despicable meaning. His lips, which had been snarling, suddenly took a downward twitch and were half parted. His nostrils were distended, and the blood, flooding into his face, empurpled it.

"Then I'll have you anyhow!" he hoarsely told her, and, his arms tensed and his head slightly lowered forward, he made as if to advance toward her. He saw, in her frightened eyes, that she would scream; but he did not know that at that moment she could not! Her heart seemed to have lost its action, and she stood, trembling, faint, in the midst of her strewn music, with the sensation that the room was turning dark.

The house was very quiet. Mrs. Sargent and Mrs. Davies were upstairs. The servants were all in the rear of the house or below or in the upper rooms at their morning work. He turned swiftly and closed the door of the music-room; then he whirled again towards her, with ferocity in his eyes. He came slowly, every movement of him alive with ponderous strength. He was a maniac. He was insane. He was frenzied by the one mad thought which had swept out of his universe every other consideration.

Gail, standing slight, fragile, her brown eyes staring, her brown hair disheveled about her white brow, felt every atom of strength leaving her, devoured in the overwhelming might of this monstrous creature. The sheet of music, which she had been holding all this time, dropped from her nerveless fingers and fluttered to the floor!

That noise, slight as it was, served to arrest the progress of the man for just an instant. He was in no frame to reason, but some instinct urged him to speed. He crouched slightly. But the flutter of that sheet of music had done more for Gail than it had for him. It had loosed the paralysis which had held her, had broken the fascination of horror with which she had been spellbound. Just behind her was a low French window which led to a small side balcony. With one bound she burst this open, she did not know how, and leaped over the light balcony rail, and ran across the lawn to the rectory gate, up the steps and into the side door and into the study, where the Reverend Smith Boyd sat toiling over a sermon!

CHAPTER XXXI

Gail Breaks a Promise.

THE *Whitecap* would have been under way except for the delay of Jim Sargent, who, in his troubled scrambles to save his Towando Valley Railroad from destruction, had sent word that he could not arrive until after dinner; so the *Whitecap*, long and low and slender and glistening white, lay in the middle of the Hudson River, while her guests, bundled warmly against the crisp breeze,

gathered in the forward shelter deck and watched the beginnings of the early sunset.

"I like Doctor Boyd in his yachting cap," commented Lucile, as that young man joined them, with a happy mother on his arm.

"It takes away that deadly clerical effect," laughed Arly. "His long coat makes him look like the captain, and he's ever so much more handsome."

"I don't mind being the topic of discussion so long as I'm present," observed the Reverend Smith Boyd, glancing around the group as if in search of some one.

"It rather restricts the conversation," remarked Mrs. Helen Davies, at the same time watching, with a smile, her sister Grace. Gail and herself had taken Grace out shopping, and had forced on her sedate taste a neat and "fetching" yachting costume, from flowing veiled cap to white shoes, which had dropped about twenty years from her usual appearance; and Grace was delightfully conscious of her changed appearance.

The cherub-cheeked Marion Kenneth glanced wistfully over the rail where Dick Rodley, vieing with the sunset in splendor, stood, chatting with easy Ted Teasdale and the stiff Gerald Fosland.

"Where's Gail?" demanded the cherub-cheeked one.

"It's time that young lady was up on deck," decided Arly, and rose.

"She's probably taking advantage of the opportunity to dress for dinner," surmised Mrs. Davies. "In fact, I think it's a good idea for all of us." But the sunset was too potent to leave for a few moments, and she sat still.

Where indeed was Gail? In her beautiful little curly-maple stateroom, sitting on the edge of a beautiful little curly-maple bed, and digging two small fists into the maple-brown coverlet. The pallor of the morning had not yet left her face, and there were circles around the brown eyes which gave them a wan pathos; there was a crease of pain and worry, too, in the white brow.

Gail had come to the greatest crisis in her life. To begin with, Allison: She would not permit herself to dwell on the most horrible part of her experience with

him. That she put out of her mind, as best she could, with a shudder. She hoped, in the time to come, to be free of the picture of him as he advanced slowly towards her in the music-room, with that frenzied glare in his eyes and that terrifying, evil look upon his face. She hoped, in the time to come, to be free of that awful fear which seemed to have gripped her heart with an unyielding clutch, and to have left deep imprints upon it; but, just now, she let the picture and the fear remain before her eyes and in her heart, and centered upon her grave responsibilities.

So far, she had told no one of what had occurred that morning. When she had rushed into the Rector's study he had sprung up, and, seeing the fright in her face and that she was tottering and ready to fall, he had caught her in his strong arms, and she had clung trustfully to him, half faint, until wild sobs had come to her relief. Even in her incoherence, however, even in her wild disorder of emotion, she realized that there was danger, not only to her but to everyone she loved, in the man from whom she had run away; and she could not tell the young Rector any more than that she had been frightened. Had she so much as mentioned the name of Allison, she knew that the Reverend Smith Boyd, in whom there was some trace of impetuosity, might certainly have forgotten his cloth and become mere man, and have strode straight across to the house before Allison could have collected his dazed wits; and she did not dare add that encounter to her list of woes. It was strange how instinctively she had headed for the Reverend Smith Boyd's study—strange then, but not now. In that moment of flying straight to the protection of his arms, she knew something about herself, and about the Reverend Smith Boyd too. She knew now why she had refused Howard Clemmens, and Willis Cunningham, and Houston Van Ploon, and Dick Rodley—poor Dick!—and Allison, and all the others. She frankly and complacently admitted to herself that she loved the Reverend Smith Boyd, but she put that additional worry into the background. It could be fought out later. She would have been very happy about

it if she had had time, although she could see no end to that situation but unhappiness.

These threats of Allison's. How far could he go in them, how far could he make them true? All the way! She had a sickening sense that there was no idleness in his threats. He had both the will and the power to carry them out. He would bankrupt her family; he would employ slander against her, from which the innocent have less defense than the guilty; he would set himself viciously to wreck her happiness at every turn. The long arm of his vindictiveness would follow her to her home, and set a barrier of scandalous report even between her and her friends.

But let her first take up the case of her Uncle Jim. She had not dared go with her news to hot-tempered Jim Sargent. His first impulse would have been one of violence, and she could not see that a murder on her soul, and her Uncle Jim in jail as a murderer, and her name figuring large, with her photograph, in the pages of the free and entirely uncurbed metropolitan press, would help anyone in the present dilemma. Yet even a warning to her Uncle Jim of impending financial danger might bring about this very same result, for he had a trick of turning suddenly from the kind and indulgent and tremendously admiring uncle into a stern parent, and firing one imperative question after another at her in the very image and likeness of her own father; and that was an authoritative process which she knew she could not resist. Yet Uncle Jim must be protected! How? It was easy enough to say that he must be, and yet, could he be? Could he even protect himself?

Where could she turn for advice, or even to have a sharer in the burden which she felt must crush her? There was no one. It was a burden she must bear alone, unless she could devise some plan of effective action; and the sense of how far she had been responsible for this condition of affairs was one which oppressed her, and humbled her, and deepened the circles about her woe-smitten eyes.

She had been guilty. In a rush of remorse and repentance, she overblamed

herself. She did not allow, in her severe self-injustice, for the natural instincts which had led her into a full and free commingling with all this new circle; for, as Arly later put it for her, by way of comfort, how was she to know if she did not find out. Now, however, she allowed herself no grain of comfort, or sympathy, or relief, from the stern self-arraignment through which she put herself. She had been wicked, she told herself. Had she delved deeply enough into her own heart, and acknowledged what she saw there, and, had she abided by that knowledge, she could have spared her many suitors a part of the hurt and humiliation she had caused them by her refusal. She had not been surprised by any of them. With the infliction of but very slight pain, she could have stopped them long ago before they came to the point of proposal: she saw that now. Why had she not done so? Pride! That was the answer. The pleasure of being so eagerly sought, the actually spoken evidence of her popularity, and the flattery of having aroused in all these big men emotions so strong that they took the sincere form of the offering of a lifetime of devotion. And she, who had prated to herself so seriously of marriage, had held it as so sacred a thing, she had so toyed with it, and had toyed, too, with that instinct in these good men!

In the light of her experience with Allison, she began to distrust her own sincerity, and, for some minutes, she floundered in that Slough of Despond.

But no, out of that misery she was able to emerge clear of soul. Her worst fault had been folly. An instinctive groping for that other part of her, which nature had set somewhere, unlabeled, to make of the twain a complete and perfect human entity, had led her into all her entanglements, even with Allison. And again the darkness deepened around her troubled eyes.

After all, had she but known it, she had a greater fault than folly: inexperience. Her charm was another, her youth, her beauty, her strength—and her sympathy! These were her true faults, and the ones for which every attractive girl must suffer. There is no escape. It is the great law of compensation. Nature

bestows no gift of value for which she does not exact a corresponding price.

Gail took her little fists from their pressure into the brown coverlet, and held her temples between the finger-tips of either hand, and the brown hair, springing into wayward ringlets from the salt-breeze which blew it at the half opened window, rippled down over her slender hands, as if to soothe and comfort them. She had been wasting her time in introspection and self analysis when there was need for decisive action! Fortunately she had a respite until Monday morning. In the past few days of huge commercial movements which so vitally interested her, she had become acquainted with business methods, to a certain extent, and she knew that nothing could be done on Saturday afternoon or Sunday; therefore her Uncle Jim was safe for two nights and a day. Then Allison would deny the connection of her Uncle Jim's road with the A.-P., and the beginning of the destruction of the Sargent family would be thoroughly accomplished! She had been given a thorough grasp of how easily that could be done. What could she do in two days and a night? It was past her ingenuity to conceive. She must have help.

But from whom should she receive it? Tod Boyd? The same reason which made her think of him first made her swiftly place him last. Her Uncle Jim? Too hot-headed. Her Aunt Grace? Too inexperienced. Her Aunt Helen? Too conventional. Lucile, Ted, Dick? She laughed. Arly?

There was a knock on her door and Arly herself appeared.

"Selfish," chided Arly. "We're all wanting you."

"That's comforting," smiled Gail. "I have just been being all alone in the world, on the most absolutely deserted island of which you can conceive. Arly, sit down. I want to tell you something."

The black hair and the brown hair cuddled close together, while Gail, her tongue once loosened, poured out in a torrent all the pent-up misery which had been accumulating within her for the past tempestuous weeks; and Arly, her eyes glistening with the excitement of it all, kept her exclamations of surprise

and fright and indignation and horror, and everything else, strictly to such low monosyllables as would not impede the gasping narration.

"I'd like to kill him!" said Arly, in a low voice of startling intensity, and jumping to her feet she paced up and down the confines of the little stateroom. Among all the other surprises of recent events, there was none more striking to Gail than this change in the usually cool and sarcastic Arly, who had not, until her return from Gail's home, permitted herself an emotion in two years. She came back to Gail with a sudden swift knowledge that Gail had been dry-eyed all through this recital, though her lips were quivering. She should have cried. Instead, she was sitting straight up, staring at Arly with patient inquiry. She had told all her dilemma, and all her grief, and all her fear, and now she was waiting.

"The only way in which that person can be prevented from attacking your Uncle Jim, which would be his first step, is to attack him before he can do anything," said Arly, pacing up and down, her fingers clasped behind her slender back, her black brows knotted.

"He is too powerful," protested Gail.

"That makes him weak," returned Arly quickly. "In every great power there is one point of great weakness. Tell me again about this tremendously big world monopoly."

Patently, and searching her memory for details, Gail recited over again all which Allison had told her about his wonderful plan of empire; and even now, angry and humiliated and terror-stricken as she was, Gail could not repress a feeling of admiration for the greatness of it. It was that which had impressed her in the beginning.

"It's wonderful," commented Arly, catching a trace of that spirit of the exultation which hangs upon the unfolding of fairyland, and she began to pace the floor again. "Why Gail, it is the most colossal piece of thievery the world has ever known!" Again she paced

in silence for a time. "That is the thing upon which we can attack him. We are going to stop it!"

Gail rose too.

"How?" she asked. "Arly, we couldn't, just we two girls!"

"Why not?" demanded Arly, stopping in front of her. "Any plan like that must be so full of criminal crookedness that exposure alone is enough to put an end to it."

"Exposure," faltered Gail, and struggled automatically with a life long principle. "It was told to me in confidence."

Arly looked at her in astonishment.

"I could shake you," she declared, and instead put her arm around Gail. "Did that person betray no confidence when he came to your uncle's house this morning! Moreover, he told you this merely to over-awe you with the glitter of what he had done. He made that take the place of love! Confidence! I'll never do anything with so much pleasure in my life as to betray yours right now! If you don't expose that person, I will! If there's any way we can damage him, I intend to see that it is done; and if there's any way after that to damage him again and again, I want to do it!"

For the first time in that miserable day, Gail felt a thrill of hope, and Arly had, to her, at that moment, the aspect of a colossal figure, an angel of brightness in the night of her despair! She felt that she could afford to sob now, and she did it.

"Do you suppose that would save Uncle Jim?" she asked, when they had both finished a highly comforting time together.

"It will save everybody," declared Arly.

"I hope so," pondered Gail. "But we can't do it ourselves, Arly. Whom shall we get to help us?"

The smile on Arly's face was a positive illumination, for a moment, and then she laughed.

"Gerald," she replied. "You don't know what a dear he is!" And she rang for a cabin boy.

The final installment of "The Ball of Fire" will be in the June Red Book, on all news-stands May 23rd.



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The Road to Thursday

By John Barton Oxford

Author of "Its Own Reward," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GRANT T. REYNARD

ARE you at outs with life? Dissatisfied with your lot? Has love lost its flavor for you? And all your to-morrows become yesterdays? Read this, then: a charming little love story that has much of all life in it.

THE low-hung western moon, in its late phases, dropped below the edge of the cloud bank and settled still lower towards the hills. Mr. Hubert Dillingham's blue-ribbon Wyandotte cockerel mistook the sudden effulgence for the coming dawn. Whereupon the cockerel, being a young and silly bird and altogether vain, sent out a clarion peal of matutinal salutation. This awakened several other cockerels in the little pens where Mr. Hubert Dillingham housed his blooded poultry, and, while none of them thus aroused happened to be blue-ribbon birds, they were quite as vain and quite as silly as the Wyandotte; nor were their voices one whit less shrill than his, despite his higher honors at the recent poultry show.

In the big house at the top of the slope—the house with the concrete walls and the red tile roof and the rose-embowered pergola—Pauline Burch stirred uneasily, opened her eyes and heard the clock on the First Unitarian Church in the square chiming three. A dimity

curtain at the open window flapped crisply in the wisp of breeze; the dewy scent of the roses rioting over the pergola was borne to her nostrils; a flood of moonlight streamed into the room, making a wide patch of shimmering silver on the floor.

She sighed sleepily, half turned on her pillow, slipped one shapely rounded arm beneath her left cheek, and was dozing pleasantly off, when all of Mr. Hubert Dillingham's cockerels crowed in unison.

Pauline Burch was suddenly wide-awake. Also she had awakened with a mingled sense of depression and resentment for awaking. The dimity curtain rustled more sharply, and the moonlight, growing bolder, had left the floor and was reposing comfortably on the foot of the bed. The Wyandotte cockerel, as becomes a blue-ribbon winner, was outdistancing the others both in shrillness and staying qualities, and was proclaiming his triumph to the world at large with a series of vibrant crowsings.

Pauline sat up in bed. Three A. M. is

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a doleful hour. Troubles are magnified then, perhaps because vitality is at its lowest ebb. And some vague, impending trouble was hanging over Pauline Burch. It was tightening her throat; it was chilling her heart; it was raising little points of goose-flesh on her bare arms and neck. What was it? For the first sleepy moment she could not remember.

Then with a rush it all came back to her. This—this was Tuesday morning. Another day had gone, and Thursday *it* would happen. A sudden overpowering dread had seized her; she felt her lungs contracting and a tingling sensation at the nape of her neck. Two short days between now and Thursday—two little, insufficient days!

Irritably she threw back the coverlet and got out of bed. On a chair near by was a long silk kimono. She slipped into it and went to the open window.

There were the roses on the pergola, and beyond the garage, and back of that the long, low line of hills with the moon just above them. And to the left of the garage, topping another slope, was the house. It was a new house just finished. Its walls were also of concrete, its roof of red tile. There too was a pergola over which another year the roses would be rioting.

It was a fine house, quite as fine as any in this pretentious suburb. There would be a garage well stocked with motors—a limousine, a touring-car, a runabout for Maurice, her own little electric for her rounds of calling and shopping and to run out to the Country Club or into the city. There were some fine pieces of genuine Chippendale for the dining-room, too, and some genuine

Sheratons for the big living-room. Surely she should be very, very happy. But happy she was not in any sense of the word. Also she was far too frank and honest a little soul to attempt to argue herself into the belief that she was happy when she wasn't.

This, then, was life—to be married to Maurice next Thursday, to live in the sort of house she had always lived in, to ride in the sort of cars she had always ridden in, to know the sort of people she had always known, to smile and be good-natured and amiable and kiss Maurice good-by each morning when he took the eight-forty-two in town, and kiss him again each evening when he came back on the five-fifty-three. A sudden fierce blaze of anger and resentment surged up within her.

Maurice! What was Maurice, after all? He might have been any one of the three-score young men who each morning took that eight-forty-two for town. She might just as well have picked out any of them—any of them, which one did not matter much. They were all well-bred, quiet, self-contained, courteous and good-natured. They talked the same language and thought the same thoughts. They worked and played and grew up and married and loved and died, all in the same old mold. There wasn't an ounce of individuality in the whole lot of them. And this was life; and being married to Maurice on Thursday was romance!

She thrust aside the dimity curtains and sank to the window-sill, her little, bare feet tapping an agitated tattoo on the wall just beneath it. The single thick plait of dark brown hair she pulled over



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her shoulder, letting it coil in her lap; then she threw open the kimono, that the coolness of the early morning breeze might touch her throat.

Romance—love—it was terribly disappointing. She had not pictured it as anything like this. She had fancied she really did love Maurice once long ago; she had fancied him different from the rest, of a finer, a nobler, a more romantic clay. Now she saw her mistake. Maurice was ordinary too—so, so ordinary. Just one of that common, common mold. There were hundreds like him, nay, thousands. He would always say the right thing and do the expected and be patient and self-restrained and well-bred and quietly courteous. Life would grow commonplace—more and more so. The eight-forty-two in the morning, the five-fifty-two back at night, a little golf, a little dancing, a few dinners, theatre twice a week, family visits on Sunday—And Thursday only two days off!

She couldn't stand it; she knew it now. She wouldn't stand it, either. She'd run away—away from it all. The winding white road down the slope seemed to beckon her in the fading moonlight. She threw off the kimono and began to dress.

Strangely enough, she knew all the time it was a childish whim, that she never really could run away, that she'd come back, tired, footsore, just as rebellious as ever—and marry him Thursday.

But the idea of it, the very bluff of carrying it out, seemed to soothe her. She put on an old skirt and a shirt-waist that was scheduled for the mission-bag, also a pair of little tan shoes that sadly needed the ministrations of a cobbler as to their heels. Her thick hair, she "wobbed" up almost any old way. It made her feel better—those old clothes and her hair done in that fashion.

The moon went down behind the hills; the First Unitarian clock struck one for the half-hour. Already the east was giving Mr. Dillingham's cockerels something to crow for.

Down the stairs stole rebellious Pauline Burch, opened the door, closed it very softly, tripped onto the porch and down the wide steps, took deep breaths of the glorious June air, and half-ran down the path to the white road.

Down the slope she went and up the next. At the top of it she paused before the fine new house to make a wry face and to stick out the tip of her tongue at it. Then away she went again, cheating herself into a momentary belief that she was running away from it all, and strangely happy and content in her make-shift freedom.

JOHNNY BASCOM delivers a cart-load of bottled milk in the city each morning, and since it is a long drive in and a long drive out and there is much work to be done at the Avondale Farms, for which Johnny drives, he starts very early and is back at the farms by five or six.

That perfect June morning, just as the east was beginning to redden beautifully, Johnny came jogging down a hill on his homeward trip, whistling blithely and very much alive to the joy of life and the glory of June. The milk bottles behind him—empties, most of them—rattled out a gay accompaniment to his whistled solo. The big gray horse plodded on sure-footedly, which was very fortunate, for Johnny was paying attention to anything—and everything—save the horse. He had just passed through the city's most aristocratic suburb and was entering the wooded stretches on its outskirts, when suddenly he reached for the reins, which dangled from a hook on the cart top, and brought his steed to a standstill. Before him an amazingly pretty girl, in oldish clothes—like somebody's cast-offs—and shoes much run down at the heel, was plodding along the roadside.

"Hello, sister," hailed Johnny. "Going far?"

The girl turned. Her face was fresh and pink, her lips ruddy red; behind them glistened little even white teeth as she smiled. Little wind-blown wisps of dark hair stayed errantly about her temples. She regarded Johnny with friendly interest.

"Quite a way," she returned.

"Hop up," Johnny invited, moving over hospitably on the cart seat. "I'll give you a lift."

She shot a quick and an approving glance at Johnny Bascom. Johnny was



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ruddy and big-framed and clean-cut of limb and shoulder. A regular young god in overalls was Johnny Bascom as he sat there smiling down his invitation to her from the seat of one of the Avondale Farms milk wagons.

In a trice she was on the seat beside him and the wagon was clattering its empty bottles as it went down the road again.

"Aint you out early?" Johnny asked.

"Oh, I don't know," said she.

"Work in one of the houses there?"

Johnny inquired with a backward bob of his head.

She shot him a swift glance, flushed a little and assented.

"Out for an airing before the day's work begins?" he persisted.

"No, I'm leaving," said she.

"Leaving?" he repeated. "Where's your things? You don't leave bareheaded and without your things, do you?"

"I do," she said with a little laugh.

"I'll send for the things."

"Had any breakfast?" asked Johnny.

"Why, no."

Johnny reached in among the milk bottles and drew out a tin box. He pulled off the cover and set it between them on the seat. A bottle of cold coffee came forth with his next backward reach and was placed beside the box.

"I always have my breakfast on the way back just about here," he explained. "Pitch in."

She hesitated.

"There's enough for us both," Johnny declared. "Here: We'll go snacks—even."

He thrust a sandwich into her hands.

"And you have the coffee," he instructed. "I'll drink milk."

"No, let me have the milk, please," she begged. So Johnny pulled out a quart bottle of the Avondale Farms creamery milk and showed her how to drink it out of the bottle without letting it run down her neck.

It required quite a little expert coaching on Johnny's part to bring about this desired result. Several times their hands touched and their heads were very close together. Johnny Bascom's eyes glowed; his breath quickened. He looked at her more and more often.

"That's the stuff," said Johnny when she had mastered the trick. "Now, you want to try one of these gooseberry tarts. They're great."

Down the road poked the milk wagon while the breakfast proceeded. The east flamed red and shot up streaks of gold. Thousands of twittering bird-voices sounded from each wooded covert. Delicious smells of wet earth and wild growing things came to their nostrils.

"Watch me!" said Pauline, breaking off a bit of the tart.

She tossed it into the air and tried to catch it in her mouth. They both laughed uproariously when it bounced off her nose.

"You'll be falling out, sister," said Johnny with sudden solicitude, and he moved over and put his arm about her, as if merely to guard against her tumbling out when she tried it again; but his face had reddened, and there was a burning glow in his eyes as he watched her.

Pauline broke off another crumb and tossed it aloft. It came down close to Johnny Bascom's smooth cheek. As she made an ineffectual grab for it, her lips brushed his cheek. He jumped violently. He said something under his breath. The birds were in the full swing of the morning chorus now; close at hand was a meadow of new mown hay.

"You'd better not do that again," said Johnny Bascom. He tried to say it lightly, laughingly, banteringly, but his voice was thick.

Deliberately she tossed up another crumb. Again it came down close to his cheek—only this time she succeeded in catching it.

Then, even as her white teeth closed on it, she felt herself drawn almost roughly across the seat. His lips were pressed to hers; there was a resounding smack.

"I couldn't help it," muttered Johnny Bascom apologetically, but with triumph in his tones. "I warned you, but you went and did it right off again. I couldn't help it."

Whereupon he kissed her again.

At that moment they were crossing a bridge over a swollen little brook.



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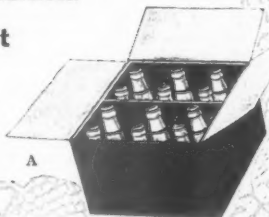
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which purred and hissed and made a fuss out of all proportion to its size and importance.

But Johnny Bascom did not know whether they were crossing a bridge or going through a mountain; for at that second kiss he felt an answering pressure of the girl's red lips on his own.

Now Pauline Burch was not the only one whose slumbers the crowing of Mr. Dillingham's blooded cockerels had disturbed.

Just as the clock on the First Unitarian was chiming three, Maurice Kent leaped out of bed and strode to the window of his room. Over the low hills to the west the moon was sinking free of the heavy cloud bank. The mingled soft smells of a June morning were borne to him.

Maurice Kent, looking out, swore softly under his breath. Then he turned to a near-by desk, switched on the lamp that stood on it, and picked up a photograph. Long and earnestly he looked at those steady eyes of the picture, the soft curves of cheek and chin, the dainty roundness of the bare throat. He swore again.

"What have I let myself in for?" he groaned. "She's a beauty—a stunning beauty, and she's sweet-tempered and good and all that. But a life with her—a whole life with her, that's different. She's no different than any other of a thousand girls like her—grow up, marry, bear children, die, but always observe the conventions. She'll always say the right thing and do the right thing; there'll be no friction—no quarrels—no anything but the dead level of conventionality and respectability. Lord!"

How had he ever come to do this thing? How had he? He'd come in time to know her every thought, her every passing mood—what few she'd have. She'd give him his freedom—all he wanted of it, and that in itself would tend to bind him closer to her. And this was life—this deadly, monotonous

round. And this was romance—this slow growing to be like one another, he and she! He was suddenly aware that he wanted to do something desperate, criminal. And once, he reflected bitterly, he had endowed her in his imagination with all those qualities she lacked. He wished he might have been once—just once—uncertain of her. And this was Tuesday; day after tomorrow was Thursday.

Mr. Kent stormed to his closet, pulled down some old hunting clothes, stuck a disreputable cap on his head, filled and lighted the strongest pipe he possessed and slammed out of the room and down the stairs. He wanted to tramp and think—tramp through underbrush woods and think anything but his present thoughts.

He caught sight, as he swung along the road, of the new house at the crest of the slope. His house? Bah! His prison, better. He turned his back on it, crossed an open lot, poked down the railroad tracks and so came to the woods,

into which he dived and went tearing through the dew-wet underbrush.

It was considerably over an hour later that he came out on another road. The eastern sky was now all blazing gold. Near at hand a little brook, swollen with the recent rains, went purling and hissing through a stone culvert with an uproar out of all proportion to its size and importance.



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Mr. Kent was suddenly aware that his tramp through the woods had made him tremendously hungry. He looked about. There was not a house in sight either way. But down the road with a great rattle of empty bottles a milk wagon was poking towards him. A quart of fresh milk would suit his present needs admirably. He thrust a hand into the hunting coat pocket and congratulated himself that he had taken a roll of bills with him, albeit at the time of his stormy setting-out the slipping of those bills into his pocket had been rather a matter of habit than anything else.

The milk wagon was close by. He stepped into the road.

"Hey!" he called sharply. "Hey, there!"

Then Mr. Kent saw why no attention was given his hail. He took the horse by the bridle.

"Say, my friend—" Kent began, and stopped short with his mouth hanging open foolishly. For the pair on the seat of the milk wagon had broken apart. There was a feminine squeal in a voice there could be no mistaking.

"Leggo that horse, you!" said Johnny Bascom, making as if to jump down, but withal Johnny Bascom, for all his brave showing, was eminently and all too evidently much embarrassed.

Kent stepped closer to the wagon. His eyes were hard and there was a sudden rigidity to the muscles along his jaw.

"I stopped you," he said to Johnny with some heat, "to see if I could get a quart of milk; but I have a more important matter to settle with you, I find. That happens to be my girl you are kissing so freely."

Johnny had one foot on the shafts and a hand on the horse's flank. He seemed about to spring at the speaker. But before he did, he turned to the girl on the seat.

"Are you?" he asked.

"No," she said hotly. "Thrash him!"

Johnny Bascom leaped into the road and rushed at Kent. The latter awaited him, gleams of an unholy joy in his eyes.

Now the seat of the milk wagon was too far back under the top for Pauline

to get a good view of proceedings. For which reason, she too scrambled nimbly from the wagon and perched on the rail of the little bridge, her hands clasped together, her breath coming fast, her whole body a-tingle with something—whether joy or fright she could not have told. She only knew she could not keep her eyes from those two dodging, ducking, grunting figures in the roadway, kicking up a great smother of dust and aiming mighty blows at each other. So some cave-dwelling ancestor of hers may have sat and watched a similar combat which *she* had instigated.

Not being either used to or versed in such affrays, she could not take in the finer points of the game; but she did know that ere long Maurice's nose was bleeding horribly and that there was a cut over one of Johnny Bascom's eyes. And that it was all for her frightened her and thrilled her and made her desperately ashamed but yet more desperately glad.

Then all at once there was some sharp in-fighting, a feint on Maurice's part, followed by a quick upward blow. Back went Johnny Bascom's head. He tottered, seemed to crumple and went down in a heap by the roadside.

With never a look at his fallen foe Maurice stalked over to the fence.

He seized Pauline by the wrist and fairly yanked her off her perch and into his crushing arms. His eyes were glowing like two coals.

"Well, *now* you're mine, anyway," he declared, and forthwith he kissed her, bleeding nose and all.

"Oh!" said she, struggling—struggling to get his head down closer to her, "oh, Maurice! Maurice!"

"Do you belong to me now?" he growled. "Do you? Forever and for all time?"

"Yes," she said with closed eyes.

"You bet you do," he declared. "Now let's get out of this."

They had quite forgotten Johnny Bascom, lying there. It is the portion of the vanquished, anyway, to be forgotten.

It was only when Pauline tripped over his limp form that she seemed to remember him.

"We can't leave him like this," she

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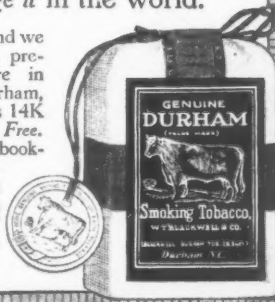
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said shakently, looking down at the fallen Johnny.

"He?" said Kent. "Oh, he'll come round all right. Well, then, if you feel that way about it, run on down the road. I'll bring him to and then I'll join you."

Pauline moved away. Kent filled his hat with water at the brook, dabbed it on Johnny's face, and when the latter stirred uneasily and was about to open his eyes, Kent fished in the hunting-coat pocket, drew out something yellow, slipped it into Johnny's hand and sped briskly away.

Pauline sat just around a bend, on a large boulder.

He sat down beside her, drawing her fiercely to him and kissing her again.

"Now, then," he said at last, "what on earth were you doing on that milk wagon at this hour in the morning?"

She looked at him with a slow smile.

"I couldn't sleep. I was worrying about Thursday—it was so near. I was running away from it—and everything."

"Thursday," he said slowly, "—it's a long, long way to Thursday. It's two whole days off. Thursday! Say, Polly, we're close to the state line here. Over in Kempton there's a queer little old justice of the peace. It's where all the eloping couples go. A short cut through the woods here and we'll be there in an hour. Let's go. And then we'll tramp it for a honeymoon, through

the woods and fields, and I'll look out for you and fight for you if I have to and—"

"Come on!" she said.

Therefore, at a most unseasonable hour of the morning a little old wizened gentleman in Kempton had his head out of his bedroom window while he parleyed with a most disreputable-looking couple who had routed him out with much ringing of his door-bell, and only the sight of a large roll of bills in the young man's hands made the wizened little gentleman anything like civil in his conversation.

At the same hour Johnny Bascom was jogging towards the Avondale Farms, now looking at the crisp new twenty-dollar bill in his hands, now rubbing his bruised cheek doubtfully.

Johnny Bascom was thinking over many things which he couldn't seem to straighten out to his satisfaction. The more he looked at that twenty-dollar bill and the more he thought things over, the greater was his quandary.

But just as he was turning the wagon into the Farms gate there came to him a brilliant inspiration.

"I guess," said Johnny Bascom with a grim smile, "she *was* his girl, after all."

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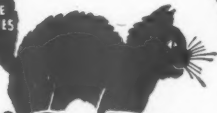
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The ORDERED HOUSE

By Thomas Gray Fessenden

IT'S the little things that establish identity and character; the little habits that grow with the years. It is one of these, revealed in the last paragraph of this unusual story, which, as Mr. Fessenden says, makes the case of which he writes so puzzling.



I AM reasonably sure of a part of this story; the facts came to me first-hand and from a source there would be no sense or reason in doubting. Another part of it, on the other hand, I would not vouch for. It is a hodge-podge of guess-work, hazy surmisings, the mere putting of a none too certain two and two together and getting a somewhat doubtful four as a result. Whether it was Brice Enderby I saw perched on that wayside fence last summer or his brother Talbot is, of course, a matter of speculation. There is much to be said—even as much has been said in certain quarters—on both sides of the question. And although the man on the fence—the man in the old gray flannel shirt with the little worn volume of Burns in his hand—went by the name of Talbot Enderby, I have my own private opinion in the matter.

Of course there is the ornate mausoleum in Woodside Cemetery, bearing on the huge bronze doors Brice Enderby's name, the date of his birth and that of his death. But that, when all is said and done, proves nothing. Also Brice Enderby's will has passed through probate; his estate has been settled; the last insignificant bequest he made has been paid. In the eyes of the law Brice Enderby is dead. This may or may not be conclusive. Death in the eyes of the law may not necessarily be death in the flesh. There have been such cases.

The facts which I know, concerning which there can be no doubt, are these:

Brice Enderby sat alone that evening in the little study which opened from his own suite of rooms in that big, ornate, over-decorated uptown house. A fire burned on the hearth; a book—it was Carlyle's "Past And Present"—lay opened and face down on a near-by table. Enderby leaned forward in his big leather easy chair, idly watching the jumping, twisting flames. Something he had just read had set him thinking.

This was his sixty-second birthday. He had never felt old before. He had been far too busy with life and success to think of growing old. But a chance sentence he had just read in that face-down book had stirred him strangely. It had brought forcibly to his mind that it was time to pause for breath long enough to put his house somewhat in order—to look at things coldly and impersonally and find out just how much of a success he had been in the world after all.

In the accumulation of material things he could look at the past with the utmost complaisance. In the eyes of the world—the world which judges a man by how much he has been able to pry or accumulate or grab from it—Brice Enderby was a marked success. From nothing he had fought his way upward to wealth and position. His wife was one of the social leaders of the city; his three children—two sons and a daughter—were coming rulers in lesser realms of their own. Brice Enderby's nod made or unmade men; he held the fate of powerful

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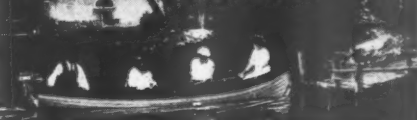
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interests in the hollow of his hand.

Yet sitting there before the fire in the little study where so much financial history had been made, Brice Enderby was aware, after reading that stray passage of Carlyle's, that his position was not wholly unassailable, that it was not utterly impregnable to doubt.

Was he a success, in the true sense of the word? If so, why was he conscious of such a feeling of missed opportunities? Why should he have that sense of something very important left out of his life?

He would put his house in order, and find out just where the trouble lay. He drew his chair closer to the fire and picking up a brass poker, began to prod the burning birch logs on the andirons.

He was a rather handsome man, tall and straight and still slim of figure. His keen, almost sharp features were clean-shaven; even with his sixty-two years there was a hint of tremendous muscular strength in the broad hands and the square shoulders and the deep, well-formed chest.

He was seldom alone like this. It being his birthday, he had chosen to celebrate it by reading here before the fire, as he had had all too little chance to do of late years.

And in reading, he had chanced on that disturbing passage—or was it disturbing? For the life of him he could not have told at the moment; for at times it seemed accusing, and again its import seemed merely one of a readjustment of view—a clarion call to a better, safer, saner outlook.

Was he, then, a success? In a purely materialistic sense he was overwhelmingly so. But he realized that the message of that sentence did not deal with things material.

On the other side of the ledger, then—what was there? He had been a good husband, a good father, a desirable type of citizen, nor had he shirked the duties that went with his wealth. He had given to charity—given liberally.

Then came the potent question to his mind: what had he given? Money, money, always money. And of himself—nothing.

Brice Enderby suddenly sat up. Old

ideals, supposedly long since dead, began to assert themselves; old aspirations, supposedly discarded years ago as visionary and chimerical, began to crowd back upon him. He was getting very close to that great Lack in his life.

Enderby's father had been a country clergyman—and his father's father before him. They had been of that sturdy, clear-visioned stock that made no compromises with conscience. They had given Brice Enderby perhaps the best legacy in the world—the legacy of sturdy health and energy that came from their own clean living and splendid ideals. The other legacy that had come to him from them he had not realized until the sentence from Carlyle had aroused him. They had given to the world of their very selves, and the call was in his blood, unrecognized for years, lulled to rest, perhaps, by the thought that the money he had given so freely had covered that need in his life.

What had he ever done that was purely unselfish? What had he ever done, even in his charities, that was not a blatant advertising of his own success? His wife, whose interests were now worlds apart from his, his children, whom he now saw infrequently and as beings from another sphere—they were merely advertisements of the hard-fought fight he had won. The very life he lived was not of his own choosing, but a tribute to the great god Success. It was demanded of him, forced upon him. He was envied, hated, sought after, fawned upon. And no one would imagine that the success he had won had brought nothing with it but a hitherto unrecognized dissatisfaction, which had flared up openly at that single passage from Carlyle.

His father and his grandfather, ministering to the needs of their obscure parishes—ministering whole-heartedly and unselfishly—had been more of a success than was he with all his money and the power that went with it. He caught up the little volume to read that paragraph again.

There was a tap at the door. His man entered with a telegram on a tray. Enderby impatiently took it and tore it open.

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The wire bore the date of an obscure little town some sixty miles away. It read:

Talbot Enderby dangerously ill at the Hotel Union here.
J. F. HALLETT, M. D.

The message brought to Enderby's mind that he had not heard from his brother for nearly ten years. Talbot Enderby was always an impractical dreamer—one of those unfortunates who never seem to find themselves, who drift aimlessly from one thing to another, more or less the sport of Fate. The eldest son of the family,—he was two years older than Brice Enderby,—Talbot had received a college and seminary education, and had been ordained for the ministry, to carry out the family traditions. Talbot had drifted from one country pastorate to another; he had never been much of a success. He read too much and speculated too much. His theology was hazy; most of his parishioners found his sermons too broad, and thus he continually was moving on to new fields, until finally he gave up his profession and started chicken-farming.

After that Brice Enderby had heard of him variously as a raiser of small fruits, the manager of a lecture bureau, a missionary to China (for a very short while), a book-agent, the editor of a country weekly. Talbot Enderby was as visionary and impractical and lackadaisical as his brother was hard and direct and sure of himself.

One thing in common with Brice Enderby Talbot maintained, and that was his pride. He steadfastly refused all offers of aid, pecuniary or otherwise. He had never married. He had drifted through life a failure, until now he was apparently nearing the end at this obscure little country hotel.

Brice Enderby re-read that brief despatch with knitted brows. Talbot, with all his failings, was still his brother; and Talbot, evidently, was dying. He turned to the waiting man by the table.

"Tell them to have the limousine ready for me in a half-hour," he instructed.

The big limousine whirled down a

muddy road, turned sharply to the right, swung along an elm-lined street and stopped before an ugly, square building of wood, looming faintly through the rainy darkness. A tarnished, faded sign-board creaked to and fro in the wind from a bracket on the corner of the house. The chauffeur brought the car to a stop.

"This must be it, Mr. Enderby," he said.

Brice Enderby got out of the car and entered the dingy room that evidently served as office. Five men sat near a glowing salamander stove, playing pitch. One of them, who seemed to be the proprietor of the place, arose as Enderby entered.

"You have a Talbot Enderby staying here?" Enderby inquired.

"Yep," the man nodded. "You a relative of his? I guess you aint here none too soon. He's pretty low. The doctor's up there with him now."

He led the way up three flights of creaking stairs, scantily covered with threadbare carpet. He tapped on the door of a room under the very eaves. A stout, youngish man opened the door. Enderby could see beyond him a painted wooden bed, and near by a rickety bureau with a smoky lamp burning feebly on it.

"Some one to see your patient, Doc," said the man who had ushered Enderby upstairs. "Relation of Mr. Enderby's."

The doctor motioned Brice Enderby into the dingy room. On the bed lay a man the counterpart of himself—a man with a keen, almost sharp and rather handsome face, a tall man, with a hint of great muscular strength in the broad hands and the square shoulders. It might have been Brice Enderby lying there, save only the eyes, which were mild, and gentle and dreamy, where Brice Enderby's were hard and rather cold.

"Brice!" said the man on the bed.

He struggled up on an elbow. The effort left him panting.

"How did you know I was here?" he demanded.

"I received a wire to-night," said Brice Enderby. "I rushed out here in the car as soon as I got it."

Talbot Enderby turned to the doctor.

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THE BEST GIFT OF ALL

"Would you mind leaving us alone for a little?" he asked.

The doctor stepped out of the room.

"I don't want to die, Brice," said Talbot Enderby as soon as they were alone. "I can't afford to die now. There's no one to take up my work. It's my heart that's the trouble," he ended, as a spasm of pain left him gasping.

Brice Enderby sat down by the bed. He noticed there were three worn little volumes within easy reach on the bureau. They evidently had seen much use. He felt a sudden biting pity for his brother, dying thus in this shabby little room.

"I've come to help you, Talbot," he said simply.

"You can't," said Talbot Enderby. "I'm through; I know it. And the thing that troubles me is that there's no one to carry on the work. I'm needed for it. After all these years I've just found something really worth doing, and now I've got to die."

He reached out for one of the little volumes on the bureau. He held it lovingly.

"I've been a failure all my life, Brice," said he. "I've drifted and tried this and that, with my heart in nothing I've done. Something drove me on from one thing to another. I didn't know what it was. But I've found out now. I wanted to be of some use, some real good. Nothing satisfied me until I found this work."

"I've been going around the little towns—the towns where the people are pretty poor and haven't much. I've brought the gospel of beauty to them. I've carried these little books with me and read to them when they could spare a minute to listen, and I've worked in the fields with the men and at the housework with the women, that they might have time to listen. I've read them Burns and Ruskin and Keats and De Quincey. They were hungry for it, but they didn't know it. They're just beginning really to need me—to look forward to my coming to them."

"You see, they haven't much time, poor souls, for anything but work, and messages like these—"

He stopped as another paroxysm of pain caught him. He smiled deprecatingly.

"All this probably bores you," he said.

Brice Enderby leaned closer to his brother. He was aware of a sudden quickening of his heart.

"Tell me more about it," he said eagerly.

Now that is the part of the story I know for facts. The rest of it is very uncertain ground.

I do know, however, that the two men talked late into the night, and that finally the doctor was called in. The proprietor, who became interested in what was going on upstairs—after the pitch game languished—finally tiptoed to that room under the eaves. From him I have it that there was much guarded talk between the three in that room—so guarded that the proprietor could only catch a word of it here and there, although his ear was pressed close to the crack of the door. But finally he heard the rustle of money, and peering through the key-hole, he saw Brice Enderby pass the doctor a roll of bills that fairly made his eyes bulge. The proprietor went downstairs soon afterward.

It was very late when Brice Enderby came downstairs. He seemed quite overcome by his brother's condition. The doctor was with him, helping him down the stairs. They went to the waiting limousine and Enderby got in. The doctor followed him. The proprietor presumes the doctor was set down at his own house farther along in the village.

He tells me he tiptoed upstairs to make sure Talbot Enderby was all right, and found him sleeping like a child in the bed.

That was one Thursday night. Friday morning Brice Enderby was found dead in the little study, just off his sleeping room in the ornate house uptown. He still had on the heavy fur coat he had worn in the limousine the night before. The little volume of Carlyle was in his hand.

The chauffeur who had driven the limousine told of Mr. Enderby's feeling ill when he arrived at the house, and how he (the chauffeur) assisted him upstairs to his apartments. It being so late, he said, they went very quietly, as Mr.

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ADDRESS

In writing to advertisers it is of advantage to mention THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

Enderby did not want to arouse the household. Mr. Enderby had said he was feeling all right when he got upstairs. The chauffeur had stayed with him until he was breathing naturally and had picked up the volume from the table and begun to read.

The physicians who were summoned pronounced death due to *angina pectoris*.

In the dingy room under the eaves at the Union Hotel, Talbot Enderby made a most wonderful recovery. In a week's time from the night his brother came to see him, he was up and about again. With his worn little volumes he went his way, and took up his humble work again. He was more enthusiastic than ever. His energy seemed tireless for a man of his years and one with so weak a heart.

I saw Talbot Enderby once last summer. He was sitting on the top rider of a low rail fence about a hay-field. It was noontime. Two horses, one hitched to a rake, the other to a tedder, munched their grain in the shade of a huge oak. Two lean-faced men, one near Enderby's age, the other much younger, stretched at their ease at his feet, their faces rapt while he read them certain poems of Burns'.

Now I do not pretend to say what transpired in that room at the Hotel Union the night before Brice Enderby's death. But this much I do know: Talbot Enderby had never been a smoker; and the man in the gray flannel shirt, who sat on the top rider of that fence and read from the little worn volume of Burns, had about him the haunting odor of excellent Havana smoke.

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THE MAN AND THE MOMENT

Continued from page 52 of this issue

It was past midnight when Michael reached Paris and, going in to the Ritz, met Miss Daisy Van der Horn and a number of other friends just leaving after a merry dinner in a private room. They greeted him with fervor. Where had he been? And would he not dress quickly and come on to supper with them?

"Why, you look as glum as an owl, Michael Arranstoun!" Miss Van der Horn herself informed him. "Just you hustle and put on your evening things, and we'll make you feel a new man."

And with the most supreme insolence, before them all, he bent down and kissed both her hands, while his blue eyes blazed with devilment, as he answered:

"I will join you in half an hour, but if you pull me out of bed like this, you will have to make a night of it with me. You sha'n't go home at all!"

CHAPTER XIII



WHOLE month went by, and after the storm peace seemed to cover Héronac. Sabine gardened with Père Anselme, and listened to his kindly, shrewd common sense, and then they read poetry in the afternoons when tea was over. They read Béranger, François Villon, and Victor

Hugo, and every now and then they even dashed into de Musset!

The good father felt more easy in his mind. After all, his impressions of Lord Fordyce's character had been very high, and he was not apt to make mistakes in people—perhaps *le bon Dieu* meant to make an exception in favor of the beloved Dame d'Héronac, and to find divorce a good thing! Sabine had heard from Mr. Parsons that the negotiations

had begun. It would be some time, though, before she could be free. She must formally refuse to return when the demand asking her to do so should come. This she was prepared to carry out. She firmly and determinedly banished all thought of Michael from her mind, and hardly ever went into the garden summer-house—because, when she did, she saw him too plainly standing there in his white flannels, with the sprig of her lavender in his coat, and his bold blue eyes looking up at her with their horribly powerful charm. The force of will can do such wonders that, as the days went on, the pain and unrest of her hours lessened in a great degree.

Every morning there came an adoring letter from Henry, in which he never said too much or too little, but everything that could excite her cultivated intelligence and refresh her soul. In all the after years of her life, whatever might befall her, these letters of Henry's would have a lasting influence upon her. They polished and moulded her taste; they put her on her mettle to answer them; and gradually they grew to be an absorbing interest. He selected the books she was to read, and sent her over boxes of them. It had been agreed before he left that he would not return to Héronac for some time, but that in late October, when the Princess and Mr. Cloudwater got back to Paris, if they could be persuaded to come to London, Sabine would accompany them, and make the acquaintance of Henry's mother and some of his family, who would be in ignorance of there being any tie between them; so the whole thing could be done casually and with good sense.

"I want my mother and my sisters to love you, darling," Henry wrote, "without a prejudiced eye. My mother would find you perfect, whatever you were like, if she knew that you were my choice, and for the same reason my sisters would perhaps find fault with you, so I want



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you to make their conquest without any handicap."

Sabine, writing one of her long letters to Moravia in Italy, said:

I am very happy, Morri. This calm Englishman is teaching me such a number of new aspects of life, and making me more determined than ever to be a very great lady in the future. We are so clever in our nation, and all the young vitality in us is so splendid, when it is directed and does not turn to nerves and fads. I am growing so much *finer*, my dear, under his guidance. You will not know me when we meet, because each day I grow more to understand.

The Père Anselm had only one moment of doubt again, just the last morning before his Dame d'Héronac left for Paris when October had come. It was raining hard, and he found her in the great sitting-room with a legal-looking document in her hand. Her face was very pale, and lying on the writing-table beside her was an envelope directed and stamped.

It contained her refusal to return to her husband, signed and sealed.

The old priest did not ask her any questions; he guessed, and sympathized.

But his lady was too restless to begin their reading, and stole from window to window looking out on the gray sea.

"I shall come here for six months in the year just as always, Father," she said at last. "I can never sever myself from Héronac."

"God forbid!" exclaimed the priest, aghast. "If you left us, the sun no more would seem to shine."

"And sometimes I will come—alone—because there will be times, my father, when I shall want to fight things out—alone."

The Père Anselme took some steps nearer her, and said, in a grave voice:

"Remember always, my daughter, that the *bon Dieu* settles things for us mortals if we leave it all to Him—but if we take the helm in the direction of our own affairs, it may be He will let circumstance draw us into rough waters. In that case, the only thing for us is to be true to our word and to our own souls, and to use common sense."

Sabine looked at him with somber, startled eyes.

"You mean, that I decided to help myself, Father—about the divorce—and that now I must look only to myself. It is a terrible thought."

"You are strong, my child; it may be that you were directed from above; I cannot say." And he shrugged his shoulders gently. "Only that the good God is always merciful. What you must be is true to yourself. *Pax vobiscum!*" And he placed his hand upon her head.

But, for once, Sabine lost control of her emotions and, bursting into a passion of tears, she rushed from the room.

"Alas! is all well?" said the priest, half aloud, and then he knelt by the window and prayed fervently, without telling his beads.

But, at breakfast, Sabine's eyes were dry again, and she seemed quite calm. She too had held communion with herself, and her will had once more resumed the mastery. This should be the last exhibition of weakness—and the last feeling of weakness; and as she would suppress the outward signs, so she would crush the inner emotion. All life looked smiling. She was young, healthy and rich. She had inspired the devoted love of a good and great man, whose position would give scope for her ambitions, whose intellect was a source of pleasure and joy to her, and whose tenderness would smooth all her path. What right had she to have even a crumpled rose leaf? None in the world.

She must get accustomed even to hearing of Michael, and perhaps to meeting him again face to face, since Henry was never to know—or, at least, not for years perhaps, when she had been so long happily married that the knowledge would create no jar. And at all events, he need not know of the afterwards; that should remain forever locked in her heart. Then she resolutely turned to lighter thoughts: her clothes in Paris, the pleasure of seeing Moravia again, the excitement of her trip to London, where she had never been, except to pass through, that once, long ago.

The Père Anselme came to the station with her, and as he closed the door of the reserved carriage she was in, he said:

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Then he turned upon his heel, his black eyes dim, for the winter months would be long with only Madame Imogen for companion, beside his flock and the sea.

Michael had got back from Paris utterly disgusted with life, sick with himself. He was bitterly resentful against fate for creating such a tangled skein, and dangling happiness in front of him only to snatch it away again. He went up to Arranstoun and tried to play his part in the rejoicings at his return. He opened the house, engaged a full staff of servants, and filled it with guests. He shot with frantic eagerness for one week, and then with indifference the next. Whatever he may have done wrong in his life, his punishment had come. He had naturally an iron will, and when he began to use it to calm his emotions, a better state of things might set in; but for the time being he was just drifting, and sorrow was his friend.

His suites at Arranstoun—which he had never seen since the day after his wedding, having gone up to London that very next night, and from there made all his arrangements for the China trip—gave him a shock, he who had nerves of steel; and he loathed to go into the chapel. His one consolation was that Binko, now seven years old, had not transferred his affection to Alexander Armstrong, with whom he had spent the time, but after an hour or two had rapturously appeared to remember his master, and now never, if he could help it, left his side.

Michael took to reading books—no habit of his youth! although his shrewd mind had not left him in the usual plight of blank ignorance, which is often the portion of a splendid young athlete leaving Eton. Now he studied subjects seriously, and the why's and wherefore's of things; and he grew rather to enjoy the evenings alone, between the goings and comings of his parties, when, buried in a huge chair before his log fire, with only Binko's snorts for company, he could pore over

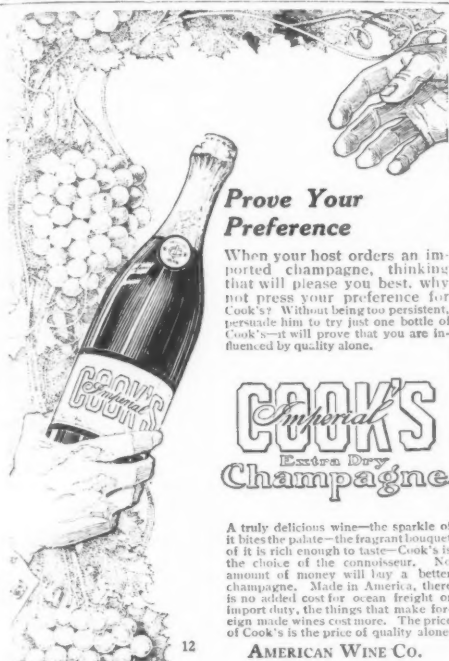
some volume of interest. He studied his family records, too, getting all sorts of interesting documents out of his muniment room.

What a fierce, brutal lot they had always been! No wonder the chapel had to be so gloriously filled! And then there came to his memory the one little window which was still plain, and how he had told Sabine that he supposed it had been left for him to garnish—as an expiatory offering, the race being so full of rapine and sin.

Should he put the gorgeous glass in now—it was time. But a glass window could not prevent the punishment, since punishment had already fallen upon him, nor even alleviate the suffering.

He was staring straight in front of him at the picture of Mary, Queen of Scots', landing—it had been painted at about 1850, when romantic subjects of that sort were in vogue, and the fellow in the blue doublet was said, by the artist, to represent the celebrated Arranstoun of that time: the one who had killed a Moreton and stolen his wife. No doubt that was why his grandfather had bought it. Michael thought it looked very well there over the secret door, and then he deliberately let himself picture how it had once swung forward, and all the circumstances which had followed in consequence. He reconstructed every word he could remember of his and Sabine's conversation that afternoon. He repictured her innocent baby face, and from there on to the night of the wedding. He reviewed all his emotions in the chapel, and the strange exaltation which was upon him then, and the mad fire which awoke in his blood with his first kiss of her fresh young lips when the vows were said. Every minute incident was burned into his memory until the cutting of the cake; after that it seemed to be a chaos of wild passion, and moments of extraordinary bliss. He suddenly could almost see her little head there unresisting on his breast, all tears and terror at last hushed to rest by his fond caresses—and then he started from his seat; the memory was too terribly sweet.

He had, of course, been the most frightful brute. Nothing could alter or



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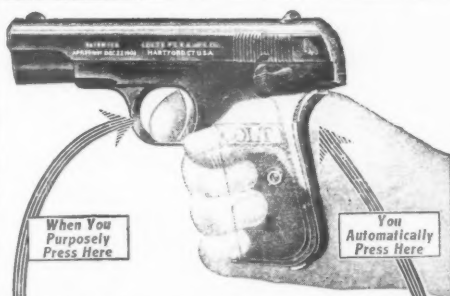
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redeem that fact; but when sleep came to them at length he had believed that he had made her forgive him, and that he could teach her to love him and have no regrets. Then the agony of waking and finding her gone!

What made her go after all? How had she slipped from his arms without waking him? If he had only heard her when she was stealing from the room, he could have reasoned with her, and even have caught her again and kissed her into obedience—but he had slept on.

He remembered all his emotions: rage at her daring to cross his will to begin with, and then the deep wound to his self love. That is what had made him write the hard letter which forever put an end to their re-union.

"What a paltry, miserable, arrogant wretch I was then," he thought, "and how pitifully uncontrolled."

The next morning's post brought him a letter from Henry Fordyce, in which Henry said he had been meaning to write ever since he had returned from France more than a month ago, but had been too occupied. The whole epistle breathed ecstatic happiness. Henry was utterly absorbed in his lady love, it was plain to be seen, and since his mind seemed so peaceful and joyous, it was evident she must reciprocate. Well, Henry was worthy of her—but this in no way healed the hurt. Michael tore up the letter violently and bounded from his bed, passion boiling in him again. He wanted to slay something; he almost wished his friend had been an enemy that he could have gone out and fought with him and re-seized his bride. What matter that she would be unwilling—the Arranstoun brides had often been unwilling. She had been unwilling before, and he had crushed her resistance, and even made her eventually show him some acquiescence and content. He could certainly do it again, and with more chance of success, since she was a woman

now and not a child, and would better understand emotions of love.

He stood there shaking with passion. What should he do? What step should he take? Then Binko, who had emerged from his basket, gave a tiny half-bark; he wanted to express his sympathy and excitement. If his beloved master was transported with rage, it was evidently the moment for him to show some feeling also, and to go and seize by the throat man or beast who had caused this tumult.

His round, faithful, adoring eyes were upturned, and every fat wrinkle quivered with love and readiness to obey the smallest command, while he snorted and slobbered with emotion. Something about him touched Michael, and made him stoop and seize the dog in his arms and roll the solid mass on the bed in rough, loving appreciation.

"You understand, old man!" he cried fondly. "You'd go for Henry or anyone—and hold her for me!" And then the passion died out of him, as the dog licked his hand. "But we have been brutes once too often, Binko, and now we'll have to pay the price. She belongs to Henry, who's behaved like a gentleman—not to us any more."

So he rang for his valet and went to his bath quietly, and thus ended the storm of that day.

And Henry Fordyce in London was awaiting the arrival of his well-beloved, who, with the Princess and Mr. Cloudwater, was due to be at the Ritz Hotel that evening.

Far away in Brittany, the Père Anselme read in his book of meditations:

It is when the sky is clearest that the heaviest bolt falls—it would be well for all good Christians to be on the alert.

And chancing to look from his cottage window, he perceived that a heavy rain cloud had gathered over the Château of Héronac.

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WHAT WILL PEOPLE SAY?

Continued from page 120 of this issue

"I was too weak to kill your soldier. But I think I'm just about strong enough to pay you up, my beauty. *Carmen* got her reward with a knife; and you're no better than she was."

He looked at the knife; it was beautifully sharp, and it inspired a desire to use it. As a man seeing a revolver wants to fire it at something, he felt the call to employ this implement. He pushed back his chair, rose, and groped his way round the table toward her, crouched and prowling.

LXVII

Persis watched him come, and did not budge. It was unbelievable that disaster should fall to such as her from such as him, in such a way. He was evidently only playing a part to frighten her.

She blew a puff of smoke from her cigarette and fanned it away with leisure; and smiled:

"You'd look well—now, wouldn't you?—if one of the servants came in."

She laughed at the picture.

"You're laughing at me again?" he said. "You're always laughing at me. But you won't feel so funny with this knife in you."

She saw now that he was not fooling. But she sneered at his effort to prove his bravery by a cowardice, and she eyed him with a marble calm worthy of a nobler cause and a better reward:

"Sit down, Willie, and don't threaten me. You don't frighten me, at all. But you may alarm some of the servants and give them more gossip."

Her obstinate pluck bewildered him, but he lowered his voice as he commented to some imaginary spectator: "My God! she has no higher thought than that! Even now when death stares her in the face!" Then he had a fanatic's mercy for her: "Why aren't you saying your prayers, you fool?"

She answered him with all the authority she could command:

"Put down that knife! You know I could save myself from any danger by raising my voice. And you know I'd rather die than bring the servants in on such a scene."

"A scene!" he shrieked. "A scene! Why, woman, I'm going to kill you. Don't you understand anything? You've only got a minute more to live. Say your prayers, damn you; say your prayers!"

There was an insanity in his look that frightened her at last. She tried persuasion now, and her voice was caressing.

"Gently, Willie; gently now, I beg you. You're not yourself, you know. You must be calm. Please!—as a favor to me."

It was the wrong word. It maddened him and he snarled: "As a favor to you! You dare ask favors of me? Go ask 'em of the man you've given favors to! The man? The men!"

And this was sacrilege to her. Her lip curled in angry contempt, and she turned from him in loathing, muttering:


"You dirty little beast!"

It was his muscles rather than his mind that did it. While his mind was recoiling from the insult, his arm had struck out, and the knife had slid deep in the snow of her half-averted left breast, through the petal of a rose, and the satin gown, and the deep white flesh beneath it and on into the wall of her struggling heart.

The blow and her effort to escape flung her backward, but the heavy chair held her. Before she could remember, a wild scream broke from her lips.

As he fell back, his hand retracted the knife. It came out all red. He gaped at it and shuddered and it fell with a little clatter on the marble floor, flinging a few crimson drops on the black and white.

The noise startled him, and he retreated from her, clinging to the edge of the table. He felt queasy and pushed back till he felt his chair and dropped into it—still staring at her and wondering and she wondering at him.



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It seemed a long time before her cry brought any response. Chedsey was in the cellar with Crofts and heard no sound, but Roake was in the pantry. He paused a moment, not trusting his ears, then pushed the door open slightly and peered through. Other servants came crowding into the pantry whispering and jostling. He motioned them back.

His master and mistress were in their places. Mrs. Enslee looked pale and was lying back in her chair. He slipped through the door and spoke timidly:

"Beg pardon, ma'am; but did you call?"

Persis at the sound of the door, finding her fan still in her hand, instantly spread it across her wound. And her first impulse was to deny.

"No," she answered. "Yes, I—I am ill—a little—suddenly— Telephone for Doctor—Doctor—the nearest doctor—you'd better run."

He turned to obey, but paused to ask:

"Isn't there anything I can do first, ma'am?"

"No, go! go!" she fluttered.

"Sha'n't I send some one else while I am gone, ma'am?"

"No, no, keep them all away, all of them till I ring."

Roake, with a face like ashes, still waited, staring:

"But, ma'am, you are hurt?—you are bleeding!"

"Nonsense!" she stormed. "I spilled some claret on my fan. The doctor! Will you never go?" And he ran out through the jumble of servants, ordering them back to their stations.

And then Nichette came stumbling through the golden portal. She had heard the cry above, and had understood the pain and terror in it, and had run pell-mell down the great stairs, her hand whistling on the marble balustrade.

She paused now, clinging to one of the red curtains, and stammering:

"*Madame, Madame! qu' y a-t-il? qu' avez-vous?*"

Persis turned her head dolefully toward the face so wild with anxiety for her sake, and murmured with a smile of affection and a tender form of speech:

"*C'est toi, Nichette? Ce n'est rien, mais—mais,*"—a shiver ran through her.

"*Je sentis des frissons. Va faire mon lit. Je me vais coucher.*"

Nichette came forward unconvinced or to help her, but Persis motioned her off with a frantic hand, crying impatiently: "*Dépêche-toi! veux-tu te dépêcher!*"

And Nichette, mutinously obedient, ran away leaving Persis shivering indeed with a chill.

And now husband and wife were alone once more. And Willie could only stare and murmur vacuously:

"What have I done? What have I done?"

"You've killed me, that's all," she answered with a curious amusement. "It was such a funny thing for you to do, so old-fashioned."

There is a strange fact about wounds in the heart. If they are not so deep that they flood the lungs and smother out life, they inspire a wild desire to talk, a fluttering garrulity.

So Persis now, with that madly stitching shuttle in her breast and that red seepage from her side, had unnumbered things to say. She chattered desperately, disjointedly.

"Oh, I suppose it had to come. It's what I get for trying to run things my own way, and now the tango-shop's closed up. It's so funny that you should be the one to—and with a knife. You didn't mar my face, anyway. I thank you for that much. I'd hate to have my face hidden at the funeral. I should hate to make an ugly cor—"

Her lips refused the awful word as a thing unclean, abominable. Her body and all the voluptuous company of her senses felt panic-stricken at the thought of dissolution. She moaned, and struggled with her chair.

"No, no, not that! What have I to do with death? I'm not ready to die. I'm not ready to die."

Willie got up and ran to her left side, but shrank back from what was there, and moved cautiously round on the slippery floor, crying: "You're too beautiful to die, too beautiful! You'll not die. The doctors will save you."

"They must come very soon then," Persis said, "for I'm bleeding—oh, so fast." She looked down along her side

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and complained: "See, my gown is quite ruined! And it was such a pretty gown. I'm afraid of my blood. How it gushes! Will it never stop? And it hurts! Willie, it hurts!" In a long writhe of pain, she gathered the tablecloth about her left side as if to staunch its flow. There was a rattle of falling glasses and a clink of tumbled silver, as she moaned: "Oh, what shall I do? what shall I do?" And she turned her head this way and that, panting as one pursued, bewildered, utterly at a loss. "Oh, what shall I do? I don't want to die. It's an awful thing to die—just now of all times, with no chance to make good the wrong I've done."

"You can't die. I won't let you die. You're too beautiful to die!" Willie protested, and then turned to pleading: "I didn't mean to, I didn't mean to strike you, Persis, at all. It was just my hand. It wasn't me that stabbed you, Persis. I couldn't hurt you, Persis."

"Oh, that's all right, Willie—I understand. I understand things better now, with so few minutes more to live. It is you that must forgive me. I haven't been a good wife to you, Willie. And he—he, of all men!—said I wasn't worth fighting for! 'Faithless to you—faithless to him!' But oh, God knows, most faithless to myself. And now I must die for it."

"You are too beautiful to die! I won't let you die! You can't die!"

"But I must, boy. Don't hate me too much. I didn't mean to harm you. Some day—long after—you'll forgive me, won't you?"

"Oh, if you only will not die, I will forgive you anything."

"That's awfully nice of you, Willie," she said with almost a smile. "I wonder if God will be as polite. They—they usually pray for dying people, don't they? I don't believe we can get a doctor in time, to say nothing of a preacher. So you'd better pray for me, Willie."

The idea was so ridiculously tragic that she laughed, but he would not so far surrender her as to pray. He sobbed:

"You've got to live! I don't know a single prayer. You mustn't die, I tell you. You've got to live!" And he wept his little heart out as he knelt at her side,

and, clinging to her hand, mumbled it with kisses.

She wept too, moaned, and dreaded the black Beyond, which she must voyage prayerless. Still she must talk. From her silence came a frail, thin voice like a far-off cry:

"It's growing very dark, Willie—very dark!—and I'm drifting. I wonder where? Can you hear my voice away off there? Better throw me a kiss, and wish me—*bon voyage*! for this—is the last—of Persis—poor Persis! Now what—will—people say?"

Something of old habit in this thought spurred her heart to strive again. She clutched at the table and at Willie's arm and shoulder and held herself erect as with claws, while she babbled:

"Willie, Willie, I've just thought. They'll try you for—for murder. The newspapers—the newspapers! Oh, my poor father! And they'll put you in jail! That mustn't happen to you—not to one of your family!—not through me!—no—no, it just mustn't! You must run—run—run!"

Enslee shivered at the future and would have fled if he could have found the strength to rise from his knees.

And then the swinging door puffed softly, sardonically, and on the tapestries Tristram and Isoud looked at one another and then at her, and shook their heads in pity.

Crofts, who had neither heard nor been told, came in with that eminent champagne in a dingy and ancient bottle.

He went behind the screen to untwist the wires and rub away the spider's webs. Then he came forward towards Willie's place to pour the first few drops there according to the rite, before he filled Persis' glass. He had eased out the cork and the soul of the wine was frothing forth into the swathing cloth, when he blinked at the empty chair; then his eyes went across to Persis. He stared at her in mute amazement. She stared at him. She beckoned.

He put the bottle on the table and shuffled towards her.

She motioned him nearer with a limp and tremulous hand, and he bent down to hear her tiny voice:

"Crofts! come closer—listen to me—

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do you hear?" He nodded. "Perfectly?" He nodded, wringing his dry old hands. "Well," she began, "I must tell you—and you must remember. Mr. Enslee and I had a—little quarrel—and I—I lost my temper—you know—and seized the knife and—and stabbed myself."

The old man did nothing unbecoming to a servant, but he stood doddering and longed to die in place of that beautiful youth. She beckoned him nearer again and spoke in a strangled voice: "Remember! I did it—myself! Re-mem—"

Her head fell forward; her exquisite chin rested in her bosom. Her body collapsed upon itself and only the arms of the chair and the table kept it from rolling out on the floor.

But as if even this last ugliness of attitude were intolerable to her, she fought against the chair and the table, and pushed and slid backward till her head was erect; and she was whispering courage to herself, hoarsely:

"Come—come—Persis!"

She seemed to be trying to die like a thoroughbred, a good loser.

And then her head rolled back in the billows of her hair, with the jeweled crown pointing downward and her eyes staring upward. Her wan, pouting, parted lips and the long arch of her perfect throat were themselves a prayer for mercy, offering up beauty as its own undoing and its own excuse.

She was dead.

LXVIII

Persis had said, "This is the last of Persis." As if there were ever the last of anybody or anything.

Of Persis it was almost the beginning. People were to hear of her now who had never known of her existence. She who had never done anything ambitious or earnest in any large sense was to become the cause of world-wide debate. The newspapers she dreaded so much were to give her headlines above panics, wars and empires.

We cannot live to ourselves alone, nor die so. If a man, or a dog, crawl off to perish in a wilderness, immediately death sets in motion great activity. On the ground ants muster, flies drum and

pound; in the earth worms make haste upward. On the empty sky a speck appears, wings gather: buzzards are overhead. In the bushes eyes peer, paws are lifted and set down with caution; coyotes, hyenas arrive. A city of scavengery is founded and begins to flourish.

When Persis screamed at the horror and the shame of being knifed, and Roake appeared, and she told him that she was ill, he believed her. He dispersed the servants. They knew, as servants always know, that a quarrel had been raging, but family quarrels were the staple of their lives and they suspected nothing unusual.

Persis had told Roake to call the nearest physician. The telephone is the confusion of distance; it mixes near and far hopelessly. So Roake called the family physician, Dr. Thill; caught him just dressing for the opera. He promised to "be right over."

Then Roake went back to give Mrs. Enslee this word. He found the woeful spectacle of Persis no longer able to hide her wound, no longer thinking of appearances. Enslee was on his knees sobbing. Crofts, too good a servant to express his emotions noisily, had not fallen to the floor or sunk into a chair; he had turned a little aside and stood waiting the next order, only rubbing his hands together a little harder than usual, while the tears poured across his eyelids.

Roake tiptoed to Crofts, put his hand on his arm, and whispered, "Mr. Crofts."

Crofts put his finger to his quivering lips and beckoning his underling aside whispered to him: "No word of this to the rest of the house, mind you. We'd best carry her to her room and get the master to his."

They took the chair by the arms fearfully: but Crofts could not lift his share of the weight. It was necessary to call Chedsey and to explain things a little to him and to pledge him to silence for the honor of the house. He sickened of his burden and nearly fainted in the little elevator as they crowded into it with their hideously beautiful freight.

Nichette had the bed ready and Enslee's man was helping her. Also two

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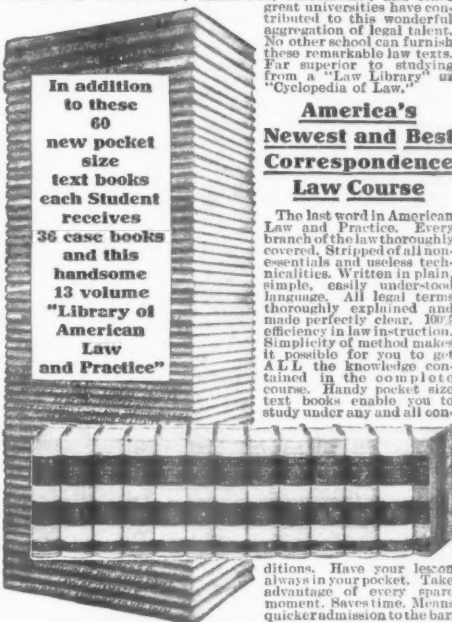
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other chambermaids had gathered to talk of the scream that had shot through the house. Nichette banished the men while she and another maid undressed the body. Crofts told Roake to see to things below, and Roake and Chedsey went down to the dining-room. Here there were tasks that were not pleasant. They stared at the ruined graces of the table, the spilled wine, and the red-stained flowers, the shattered and tumbled glasses as if an orgy had proceeded there. The cook was told that the rest of the dinner would not be served. The laundress was called from her supper to take charge of the red tablecloth and the napkin. The housekeeper must know that Roake and Chedsey were not to be charged with the breakage. The kitchen-maid was sent to scrub the marble and on her knees she must follow the crimson trail to the door of the elevator, and wash that too.

Before the doctor arrived, a dozen people had been told that the mistress of the household had killed herself. It was easy to warn them that loyalty to the family imposed absolute silence. But what money or what threat or plea could ever bribe a loose tongue to keep somebody's else secret?

Then Dr. Thill came in his motor. He left his huge fur coat on the hall floor and dashing upstairs flung off his evening coat and his white waistcoat, rolled back his cuffs. He wrought upon the exquisite bare flesh of Persis and upon the stopped clock of her heart with all his science, but he could not make her anything but a cadaver.

As he toiled, he asked questions. Crofts and Nichette told him what they knew, or thought they knew. Willie was supported in and questioned. Remorse and fright made him pitiable. Still there remained a fox-like intelligence. He told the doctor what Persis had told Crofts, but he was so full of contradictions and confusion that Dr. Thill quickly suspected the truth. He was enraged and revolted. The cruelty of the murder was bad enough, but the wantonness of destroying so perfect a machine as he found Persis to be was more wicked in his eyes.

But he was a typical family doctor.

People who were dead were outside his province. His clients were the living, and his business to keep them alive and well. He had foiled death-bed revenges, aborted scandals that threatened ruin to the young, risked his life and his liberty for his patients. His trade was fighting the ravages of sin and error; saving people, not destroying them. He felt no call to deliver an Enslee to the electric chair.

He put Willie to bed, jammed bromides into him, and forbade him to talk or to see anyone. He telephoned Persis' father and Willie's mother to come at once. He told them as delicately as he could. It was like breaking a thunderbolt gently. Persis' father was stricken frantic. He could not believe that his beautiful, his wonderful girl was dead. He ran to her bedside, lifted her in his arms as if she were again his little child, called to her, wept horribly over her, imagined the truth and vowed every revenge.

Mrs. Enslee was first and last Willie's mother. Her thought was of him: her heart was his advocate alone. She committed herself utterly to his defence.

After the first tempests had worn out Persis' father, he began to feel that it would not comfort her to add scandal to her fate. He loathed the very name of Enslee, but he had profited by it. He was still involved with it financially; it was his daughter's final name. He joined the conspiracy to bury the truth in Persis' grave. He solaced himself with the thought that it would be her wish.

Dr. Thill was ready to give a certificate that Persis had died of heart-failure. Even the story of suicide would attract the noisy attention of the journals. He left the matter in abeyance for the moment. The needful thing was a few hours of saving peace and silence. He would be glad even to postpone the news from the next morning's to the next evening's papers.

But little things thwart great schemes. One of the housemaids who had been flirting with the brindle-haired reporter, Hallard, remembered in the midst of the panic that he was to take her that night to a moving picture theatre. He would be loitering outside now. She ran



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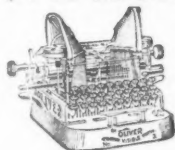
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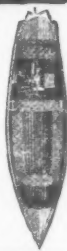
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out bare-headed to explain that she could not keep her engagement. When he asked why, she told him falteringly that there had been a death in the family: she apologized for permitting such an affair to interfere with her promised evening out but he gasped:

"A death in the Enslee family! Gosh, I've spent so many dismal hours on death-watches that it's great to have you slip me a nice little ready-made death like this. Whose was it? Who died it?"

The maid felt that she now had a clew to Mr. Hallard's profession: from his cheerful reception of such news he must be an undertaker. She explained that it was Mrs. Willie Enslee who was dead!

"My God, the young one?" he cried, afire with the news possibilities.

"Yes: she killed herself."

This was almost too good to be true. Hallard grew greedy as a miser:

"Does anybody else know of this? Have any reporters called at the house?"

"Nobody; only the doctor."

Hallard looked at his watch. He had time to build up a big story, which was good; but there was time enough for the other papers also to arrive on the ground, which was bad.

"Why did she kill herself?"

"Nobody knows. She had a terrible quar'l with Mr. Enslee, though."

"What about?"

"Nobody could find out."

Hallard thought hard. The name of Forbes occurred to him, for he remembered the time he had seen him with Persis.

"Did Captain Forbes call to-day?"

The maid stared: "Aint you a wonder! How did you know?"

"Did they quarrel about him?"

"Nobody knows they did, but all of us feels sure they did."

Hallard bade his inamorata good-night with genuine affection. She had been worth while.

He went to the door of the house, and reached it just as Persis' father arrived in his car and was helped up the steps. Hallard tried to push in with him, but was thrust out. He sent his card in and it was returned to him.

Dr. Thill had thrown up his hands in despair at the card. Reporters seemed to

be ubiquitous like microbes. But he realized that it was now necessary to make a formal announcement to the papers. He had the housekeeper telephone it to a press-bureau—simply that "Mrs. William Enslee died of an attack of heart failure in her home at seven o'clock, while at dinner with her husband. Mr. Enslee is prostrated with the shock."

Meanwhile Hallard, rebuffed at the front door and at the tradesmen's entrance, and rebuffed by telephone when he called up from a booth in the nearest drug-store, was trembling with the opportunities almost within his reach. His was the ecstasy the writer of tragedies can inflict on his characters. Only, the Hallards are dealing in real lives and not feigned.

Hallard's scent for news quickened at the thought of Forbes. In a roundabout way he learned the name of Forbes' hotel. He hurried there, and sent up his card with a penciled note: "Would appreciate expert opinion regard to probable fate Philippine Islands in case of war with Japan."

LXIX

The card found Forbes not yet recovered from the hurricane of passion that had swept through his heart. He was dumfounded at what he had done and said; at his ruthless cruelty, his revulsions from love to hate and back again: at the supreme insolence of his treatment of the husband he had wronged.

He found Enslee's little silver-handled revolver in his pocket, and tossed it on the table. He felt that he ought to turn it against himself in self-execution. It was too weak an instrument for such a business. He got out his own big army revolver. But he was not of the type that suicides, any more than Persis was.

He began to pack his things for his return to hard service away from the frivolities of the city. The sight of his uniforms made him the soldier once more. He grew homesick for the brisk salute of his soldiers, the gruff and wholesome joviality of fellow-officers, the noble reality of his chosen career.

And then he came across that boudoir cap again. It bewitched him. It was so

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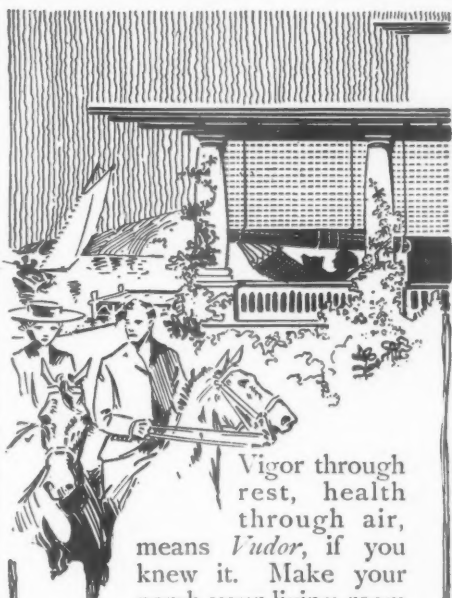
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utterly unmilitary, so far from usefulness or importance, all pliant and fragrant and adorably foolish. He put it back in its nest in the pocket next his heart. And his heart quickened its pace.

With that quickening came by reflex a sense of terror. What had become of Persis? He had left her to the mercies of Enslee. It occurred to Forbes that if a man had dealt with him as he had dealt with Enslee, he would be so maddened that he would run amuck and slay the first thing he met, and first of all, the woman who had dragged him into such shame below shame.

What if Enslee had attacked Persis? beaten her, or torn her face with his nails, or hurled her out into the street? He felt that he must go to her rescue. The impulse lasted only long enough to be ludicrous. What right had he in that household? What harm could Enslee wreak upon Persis to equal the wrongs that Forbes had done her? He blamed himself for everything, and blaming himself, absolved her, forgave her, loved her again.

In this seethe of moods, the card of Hallard arrived with a request for his expert military opinion on a subject that had been one of his hobbies in the days when military ambition was the major theme of his life. It renewed his hope. It was like the feel of something solid underfoot to a spent swimmer in cross-currents.

He welcomed Hallard with cordiality, apologized for the disorder of his room, expressed an opinion that he had met Hallard somewhere before. Hallard said he thought not. As he stated his plans for a Sunday special, a "symposium" of views on Philippine fortification, he picked up the silver-handled revolver on the table, and laughed:

"Is this lady-like weapon the latest Government issue?"

Forbes did not laugh: he flushed as he shook his head. A wild thought came to Hallard. Forbes might have been present at Mrs. Enslee's death. He might have killed her himself, with her own revolver. It was a wild theory, but he had known so much of murder and had come upon such fantastic crimes, that nothing seemed impossible to him.

With pretended carelessness, he broke the silver revolver open, and glanced at the cylinder. Every chamber was full but one. Had a shot been fired from it? or had one chamber been left unloaded for the hammer to rest on?

Hallard put down the weapon and talked yellow journalism of the Philippine problem. A little later he said quite casually:

"Too bad about Mrs. Enslee, wasn't it, Captain?"

The startled look of Forbes confounded his theories:

"What is too bad about Mrs. Enslee?"

"Her sudden death, I mean."

"Her death!" Forbes cried, the world rocking with sudden earthquake. "Her death! Not Persis! Persis isn't dead?"

"Why, yes: didn't you know?"

"My God! My God! how did she die? She was well, perfectly well at—at—this afternoon when I—tell me, man, man, what do you mean?"

Hallard was readjusting his case. He spoke very gently:

"I am mighty sorry to have told you without warning. I thought of course you knew. You were a great friend of the family, weren't you, Captain?"

Forbes blenched at this, but his grief was keener than his shame.

"Tell me, how did she die?"

"The story we get is that she killed herself—stabbed herself!"

Forbes gripped his head in his arms and bowed to the thunderbolts crashing about him. At length his distorted face appeared again and he demanded:

"Who was with her when she killed herself?"

"Her husband."

"Then it's a lie. She never—she wouldn't—he killed her! And it's my fault for leaving her with him. I ought to have known better. I was tempted to go back to her. I shouldn't have left her there with him—and now she's dead. He butchered her. I'll kill him for it. I will! He wasn't man enough to—he—did you say you were a reporter?"

"Well, I'm a special writer."

Forbes' words began to roar back through his memory. He began to hear them as they would fall on a stranger's ear. Even in his frenzy, he realized the



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danger of his madness. Talking to a reporter was like crying his thoughts aloud in Madison Square Garden. Grief, discretion, remorse, revenge assailed him from all sides at once.

He seized Hallard by the shoulder:

"Look here. This Philippine idea was just a trick, wasn't it?—to startle me and make me forget myself. You fooled me, but you can't get away with it."

He snatched his big army revolver from the holster in his trunk tray and set the muzzle of it to the belly of Hallard, and he thundered:

"I ought to shoot you for this, and I will, unless you swear that you will never print a word of what I've said, never breathe a word of it to a soul. Promise, or by—"

Hallard smiled and raised his half-eyebrow.

"You're a little excited, Captain, aren't you? You're forgetting that if you shot a reporter it would be about the poorest way of escaping publicity ever imagined. People would naturally ask what it was you were so anxious to conceal, eh?"

Forbes turned away, helpless. Hallard anticipated his next desperate idea: "I'm much obliged to you, Captain, for not offering me a ten dollar bill or a new suit of clothes. They usually begin with that. But it rarely works, Captain. We're a shiftless lot, some of us, but we've got our ideas of duty too."

"Duty to what?" Forbes sneered. "Duty to act as grave-robbers and expose the sorrows of the world to the laughter of the public? To drag families down to ruin?"

"Duty to throw the light into dark places, Captain: duty to make it hard to conceal things the public ought to know: duty to keep digging up the truth and throwing it into the air."

"Truth!" Forbes raged. "What have you got to do with the truth? Would you know it if you saw it? Would you use it if you had it?"

"You bet I would," Hallard said. "If you'll tell me the truth about the suicide—or murder as you call it—of one of the most beautiful members of one of the most prominent families as far as you know it, I'll publish it."

"In your own way, yes."

"In your own words, Captain. I write shorthand. Just dictate to me the whole story of your acquaintance with Mrs. Enslee and your reasons for believing that her husband killed her and I'll publish it word for word. You can read it, and sign it, take affidavit that it's the truth, so help you—"

Forbes dropped into a chair, discredited, his bluff called. All the lofty motives and compulsions of chivalry took on an ugly look: Sir Launcelot was an adulterer and a welcher.

The hideously altered face of things shattered him so that Hallard felt merciful:

"I'm sorry, Captain, but you see how it is. You see why reporters get a little hard, why our lips sag a little. We don't publish the truth oftener because people won't tell it to us. The truth isn't the pure white lady in a nice clean well that the painters represent her: the truth is a kind of a worm-eaten turnip that comes out of the ground with a lot of dirt on it. We don't print all we find out by a long shot. If we did, this old town would make for the woods: and the people in the woods would run to cover in town. I'd be glad to drop this affair right here, but, don't you see, I can't. The Enslees are too big to overlook. There'll be an army of reporters on the job, with their little flashlights poking everywhere. The police will fall in line later. There'll be editorials on the wickedness of society. Society—if there is such a thing—isn't any wickeder than anybody else. The middle classes are rotten and the lower classes are putrid. But society makes what old Horace Greeley called 'mighty interesting reading.'

"The name of Enslee is going to be a household word, because when an Enslee sins it's like sinning in the grandstand. I saw something like this coming a year ago. I thought it might simmer down, but it's broken bigger than I ever dreamed. You're in for it, Captain. The Great American People are going to rise on the bleachers and holler for blood. It will forget all about you the minute something else happens. Take your medicine, Captain. It will be somebody else's



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turn soon, for most of us are doing the tango on a thin crust of ashes over a crater. But it's the face-cards that the two-spots like to read about. The minute somebody else that's prominent pops through, we'll let you alone. But you're in for it. Better come in under my umbrella and give me the story."

He meant it well, but it was impossible for Forbes to accept his philosophy or his counsel. To Forbes he was a slimy reptile with a hellish mission. Forbes told him so, denied all that he had said, defied him, and turned him out.

LXX

The next morning's papers without exception gave the death of Mrs. Enslee "under mysterious circumstances," the doubtful honor of the front page, right hand column. In some of them the account bridged several columns. The headlines ranged from calm statements to blatant balderdash.

To Forbes, who had not slept all night and had sent down for the papers soon after daybreak, the stories were inconceivably cruel, ghoulish, fiendishly ingenious. The fact that Persis' wedding had been celebrated less than a year before was emphasized in every account. She was called a "bride" in most of them, and her "honeymoon" was used dramatically in others. The importance of her family and of Enslee's was exaggerated beyond reason. Her portrait was published even in papers that rarely used illustrations.

Her beauty pleaded from every frame of headlines, and it seemed as if her face had been clamped in a pillory and that the newspapers were pelting her without mercy or decency.

There was no way of protecting her, no way of punishing the anonymous rabble, no way of crying to the mob how lovable she had been, and how impossible it was that she should have taken her own life. He was understanding now how much worse a scandal it implied to say that she had been murdered. A woman might kill herself for any number of reasons, most of them pathetic. But a woman whom her husband puts to death can hardly escape calumny.

Forbes had not heard, or had forgotten, what paper Hallard represented. He soon recognized his touch. One paper and one only implied that Persis' death might not have been a suicide but a murder. One paper alone referred to her "interest in a certain well-known army officer who had recently come into a large fortune."

When he read this, Forbes turned as scarlet as if he had been bound hand and foot and struck in the mouth.

Only one morning paper implied that Persis had strayed into the primrose path of dalliance. Not one evening paper failed to emphasize this theory. The editors of these sheets appeared at their offices before dawn, issued their first "afternoon" editions at eight A. M. and had their "night" editions ready by noon. They all made use of Hallard's material.

Before Forbes had finished his breakfast, he was visited by the first reporter and refused to see him. Within the next half hour a dozen reporters were clustered in the hotel lobby. They lay in wait for him below like a vigilance committee zealous for his lynching.

Forbes felt like a trapped desperado. He dared not venture out into that lurking inquisition. He dared not call upon any of his friends for help lest they be tarred with the brush that was blackening his name. He had planned to take a morning train to his Western post. He was afraid to go to it now. He was afraid to arrive at the garrison, knowing that the scandal would have preceded him on the wires.

He decided that he must resign from the army before he was dismissed the service for bringing disgrace upon the uniform. There were officers enough whose irregularities were overlooked, but they had kept out of the public prints. Forbes had not only sinned but had been found out.

He felt like a mortgagee who sees himself foreclosed and sold up. He had lost Persis and he was about to lose his career. He wrote out his resignation, addressed the envelope, sealed it, bent his head down upon his arms above it and gave himself up to despair. His loneliness was almost more than he could endure.



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Just then a letter was brought to his door. He had refused to answer the telephone and he ignored the knocks of the hallboys. This letter was pushed under the door. It was from Ten Eyck.

Dear Forbesy:

Just a line to tell you that my heart aches for you and with you. The thought of Persis dead is almost unthinkable, nearly unbearable to me. What it must be to you, I dread to imagine.

I always remember the old Persian philosopher's motto when he was tempted to enjoy joy too much or grieve too much over grief: 'This too will pass away.' You are too big a man to let this or anything break you down. Bend to it, but don't break.

It occurs to me that you may need a little time to recuperate where you can't read the papers or hear them bawled under your window.

On Long Island I have a little shack on a sandbar on the edge of the ocean. How would you like to run down there for a few days? You can do your own cooking. If you wish I'll go along, but if you'd rather be by yourself, I won't go. I think you'd better be by yourself and think it all out.

I enclose a time table with the best trains marked.

Take a closed taxi to the station, and you'll not be noticed. If I can do anything, command me.

Affectionately yours,

Murray Ten Eyck.

Not a reproach. Not an "I told you so." Not a minimizing of the tragedy. Just a life-preserver thrown to a man in deep waters.

Forbes wrote: "God love you for this! I'll never forget. I'll prove my gratitude by sparing you the ordeal of my company."

He packed a suit-case, bribed a porter and an elevator man and escaped from the hotel by one of the service elevators to the basement and the trade entrance. He swore to heaven that this should be the last time he would sneak or cower. He reached his destination without remark, and found it congenially dreary.

There was a furious storm that night; wind and rain flogged his cabin and the sea cannonaded the beach. But the shack survived and the beach was still there in the morning. There was the

wreckage of a little schooner cast ashore.

At first Forbes railed against the heartlessness of the sea. But gradually he came to understand that the ocean is not heartless: it simply obeys its own compulsions, and the wrecks it makes are those that should not have been out upon the waters or those that got in the way of the laws. That was what he had done.

As he strolled the sands or sat and watched the endless procession of waves hurling themselves upon the shore to their own destruction, in his thoughts memories came up one after one, like waves: memories of beautiful hours that seemed to have no meaning beyond their own brief charm; visions of Persis in a thousand attitudes of enchantment, in costume after costume. He saw her at the theatre, lithe, exposed, incandescent; he clasped her in the tango; he clenched her hand at the opera; he saw her riding her cross-saddle in her boyish togs; he clasped her in the taxicab in the rain; he walked with her in moonlight and in the auroral rose; he galloped alongside her, strolled with her in the woods; he held her in his arms while they watched the building burning gorgeously at night; he saw her in all her careless childish ecstasies and wild throes of rapture.

He remembered what she had told him of Ambassador Tait's warning: "The world is old, my child, and it is stronger than any of us. And it can punish without mercy."

He was tasting now the mercy of the world, and Persis, lying in cold white state as he imagined her, was the visible slain sacrifice on the altar. They had indeed sinned. She had chosen wealth instead of love, and they had tried to steal love too. The fact was that they had been wicked. They had duped and sneaked and feasted on stolen sweets. Their punishment was just. Many others had sinned more viciously and prospered in their sin or repented comfortably and suffered nothing. But they were not to be envied altogether.

Somehow to his man's heart it brought a strange kind of comfort to feel that this ruination was not a wanton cruelty, but a penalty exacted. It made the world

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less lonely, and replaced chaos with law and order. Perhaps other souls would take warning from their fate; perhaps other guilty couples would be frightened back to duty.

The world was in a tempest against him. The waves had cast up his beautiful fellow-voyager on the sands. If only their shipwreck might keep others from putting out to sea in pleasure-craft unseaworthy and unlicensed!

Had Forbes read the papers he would have known that the storm had not subsided yet. The wealth of Enslee could not bribe the least mercy: it was rather a stimulus to the press.

At the height of the tempest, the funeral of Persis was held. Almost nobody attended it, and the few that did were rather drawn by curiosity than respect. Those who knew Persis well were afraid to be seen in the company even of her body. They were busy denying their earlier intimacy, and telling how they had foreseen this disaster. She went in lonely state to join the silent throng in the cemetery, and she knew no more of the storm that raged about her, than the world knew of the one high achievement of her soul. She was like some little brilliant bird of paradise struck to the ground by a lightning-stroke. The storm roared on; the ferocity and boldness of the newspaper attacks increased with every extra. The fact that a theory was hinted in an early edition was taken as proof enough for a positive statement, in a last edition. Finally there were demands for the arrest of the husband.

The district attorney was busy, however, on an Augean task, the cleaning out of the police stable. He delayed or forebore to take up the Enslee matter. He was accordingly attacked as a toady to the rich. This stung him to an investigation.

The police entered next into the affair. Enslee was sent for and cross-questioned by commissioners. He was at bay and he revealed unexpected gifts of evasion. Willie's lawyers stood by him. They were high-priced men and they earned whatever he paid them. They succeeded in fighting off an indictment.

But even now Hallard and his cronies

would not let him rest above ground or Persis beneath. Conflicting bits of Enslee's testimony were published in parallel columns, and the explanation that Persis in her final rage had seized the knife from his hand and stabbed herself, was declared impossible and unconvincing.

Her dying statement, as sworn to by Crofts, stood, however, as the one strong shelter over Enslee's head. The skeptics insisted that Crofts, being deaf, had heard wrong; or been bribed to perjury. None of them dreamed that Persis could have devised that snow-white lie, as her atonement to the man she had betrayed.

Hallard was obsessed with an idea that if Persis' body were exhumed it would be shown that she could not have dealt the fatal wound with her own hand. He had once organized a campaign against a decision of the court sentencing a valet to the penitentiary and kept it up until the prison gates were opened and the man gained an opportunity to tell his story anew. He was remanded but the despotic power of the press was demonstrated. If he could open the penitentiary, why not the grave in which a *corpus delicti* had been hastily hidden.

With every weapon in the vast army of newspaperdom he waged his battle. The political ambition of the district attorney finally yielded to the coercion. An order was obtained from the court commanding the officials of the cemetery to unseal the tomb where Persis' body had been stored until the great monument Enslee had commissioned could be made ready to weigh her down irretrievably.

Forbes, having regained his courage in his absence in the wilderness, was seized with a mad desire to gaze upon his beloved's face once more and to whisper to her a prayer that she forgive him for abandoning her in her desolation, and her peril. Ten Eyck used every plea to dissuade him, but, failing, determined to go with him.

Permission to be present at the exhumation was secured with little difficulty and the two men joined the group of court officials and the six experts who were to decide from examination whether or not Persis could have inflicted the fatal wound upon herself.



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And so Persis came back again to the world in a mockery of resurrection, back again to the light of day that had blessed her beauty and not known her sin. Forbes waited her reappearance in a frenzy of anxiety. It was to him a kind of holy tryst that he must keep at any cost.

Slowly the casket was opened: one by one the screws in the coffin lid were removed and at last the board was lifted from over her white, white face. Some impulse of protection led Ten Eyck to thrust Forbes back until he himself had taken the first look. He gazed and groaned at the havoc death had wrought in all that beauty. When Forbes pressed forward Ten Eyck whirled and clapped his hands over Forbes' eyes and dragged him aside, whispering huskily:

"Don't look! In God's name keep the memory of her as she was."

Forbes suffered himself to be led aside. They waited at a distance while the tests were made. The knife was closed in the icy fingers and the exquisite arms moved here and there. Over the cold and silent body the experts wrangled. And the upshot of the desecration was that they could not agree; three of the jurors declared that Persis could not have reached as far around to set the knife in her side; and three that she could have done it whether she did or no.

And Persis, wherever she was, kept

her secret. And Willie, abiding the decision in a stupor of terror, thanked God and her for their silence.

The newspapers had much to say of this last phase of the Enslee mystery. They summed again all the old scandals and then they too went silent. The misshaps of other lovers furnished them with unfailing supply of the old mistakes that are the eternal news. Forbes, who had withheld his resignation from the army at Ten Eyck's bidding, was received back into his place, shorn of his ambitions, his youth and his pride.

Often and often when he is alone he takes from its hiding shelter a little nightcap of ribbons and lace and shakes his head with vain regret.

He thinks of Persis always as she was that morning when this filmy cap fell from her lawless curls. He cannot but feel that there was something elect in her, something divinely beautiful, however thwarted for this world. But then he loved her; he could forgive her anything. If God loved her, could He not do as much?

When the skies are clouded, he remembers her wise little saying, "Behind the blinds there are always eyes." He wonders if there are Eyes behind the clouds and beyond the sun. And if there are, and if they are the seeing eyes of perfect understanding, What do those People say?

T H E E N D .

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